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STEPHEN PERKINS
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ETHNIC DRUMMERS:
WORLD INSPIRATION

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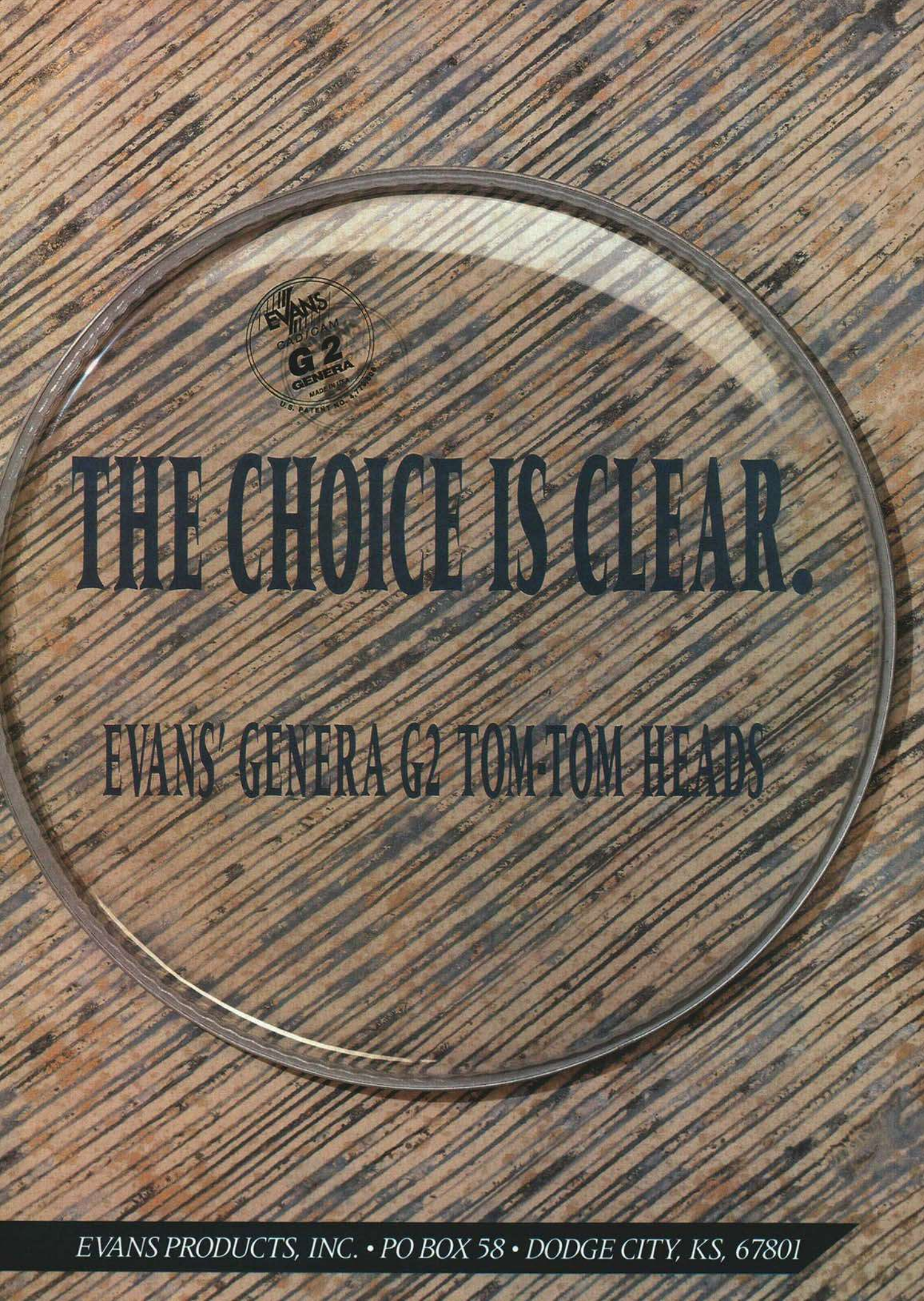
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VOLUME 17, NUMBER 3

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LARRIE LONDIN REMEMBERED

More than just a great drummer, Larrie Londin was a major presence on the studio scene. His colorful, earthy personality was perfectly reflected in the music he made—rock solid, eminently reliable. In this tribute, we hear touching and insightful reminiscences from the great artists who knew Larrie the best, and who felt his inimitable style the strongest.

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Stephen Perkins has a new band, an unusual new drum setup—but the same old creativity and passion for drums that pricked up the ears of millions of Jane's Addiction fans. In this exclusive story, Stephen talks about his work with Jane's Addiction, his current project, Porno For Pyros, and how bongos, timbales, and timpani figure into his drumming today.

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In Memory Of Larrie

Late last August, we all lost still another brother with the passing of Larrie Londin. A key player on the Nashville scene for many years, Larrie was also an *MD* Advisory Board member and lent his support to *Modern Drummer* whenever he could.

Unfortunately, I never knew Larrie well on a personal level, though I did have the privilege of working with him at *MD's* 1990 Drum Festival Weekend. Along with being an extraordinary talent, I found Larrie to be exactly what everyone who knew him well had told me—that being one of the nicest guys in our business with a great love for the drumming world and everyone in it.

I could go on eulogizing Larrie in this column, but I honestly feel it would be much more revealing to reprint a letter I received after Larrie's death from one of his devoted fans. Personally, I think the letter says it all about the kind of person Larrie was, in words all drummers can truly appreciate.

Dear Ron:

I just felt the need to write this letter and tell you what a special person Larrie Londin was. I can remember some years ago, just loving the sound of Larrie's drums. I had tried very hard to capture that sound on my own drums, but had great difficulty doing so. Finally, I located an address for Larrie and wrote to him in what I felt was a remote possibility of receiving a response.

A short time later a letter from Larrie arrived, along with an autographed picture of him on stage with Elvis Presley. As if that weren't enough, Larrie had also made a cassette tape for me, where he explained, in step-by-step detail, just why his drums sounded the way they did, and how the bearing edges were customized for a more resonant tone with added low end. He mentioned feeling badly that perhaps I'd purchased the same brand of drums because he had endorsed them, and then was unable to get the same sound. Larrie actually took the time to go over *every* one of his drums on this tape, explaining every aspect of their construction, customizing, and tuning.

To top it all off, Larrie had just returned home from an extended Everly Brothers tour, and the letter and tape were written and recorded on a Christmas Eve. I really wonder how many people would have gone to *this* extent to help a young, unknown drummer and total stranger from Sioux City, Iowa. Larrie's playing had a major influence on me, and the kindness he showed is a testament to the kind of person he was. Larrie Londin was a true inspiration. I will miss him dearly.

Danny Wyant
Sioux City, Iowa

RS

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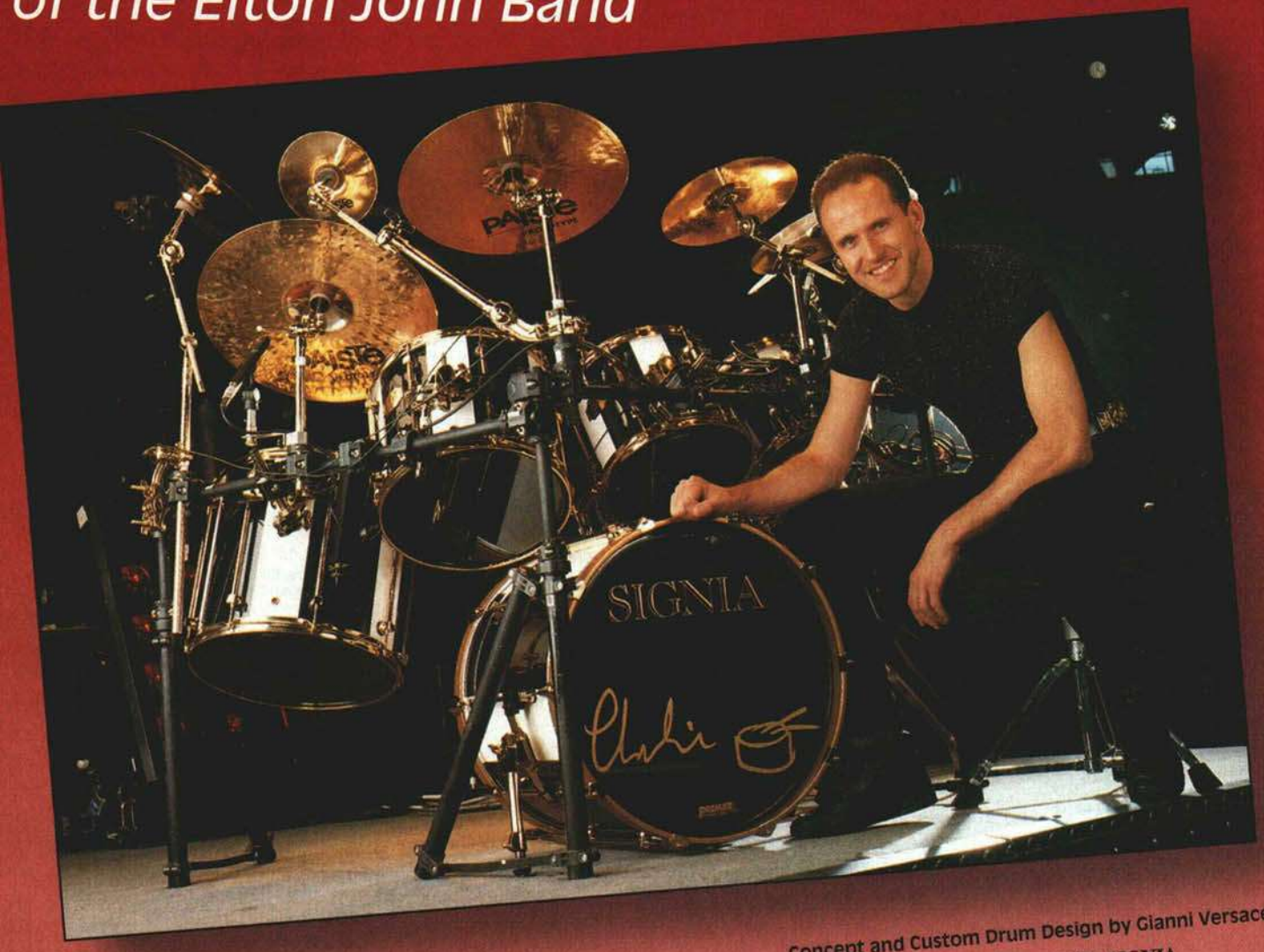
Profile: Charlie Morgan
of the Elton John Band



Concept and Custom Drum Design by Gianni Versace

PERSONAL DATA:

Charlie Morgan

BORN: Hammersmith, London, England.

CURRENT PROJECTS:

- Currently on a sold-out World Tour with the Elton John Band.
- Just completed new album with EMI artist Tasmin Archer
- Video for Kate Bush's "*Rocket Man*" cover on the "*Two Rooms*" Album.

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LARRIE LONDIN

Editor's note: For the second time in a matter of months, the drumming world has lost a major figure. Concern for Larrie Londin was expressed by MD *readers immediately following his initial illness last April; that concern turned into condolences upon word of his passing in August. Here are some of the sentiments offered in tribute to Larrie.*

There are some musicians who play with a feel and pulse that seems rooted in the earth. They can convey that as naturally as they walk. Their grooves have grit. Ralph Gallant—whom most people knew as Larrie Londin—was one of those musicians.

Larrie was a player whose ability encompassed all styles. He never failed to enhance whatever he played with his time, taste, and wit. He could take something common and everyday and, through his playing, give it meaning—not an easy thing to do.

Writing this letter about our fallen friend is not an easy thing to do, either. I could fill it with anecdotes about his generosity and goodwill toward his fellow drummers, but all who knew him have those stories to tell. I could say he was ever the student, and shared his knowledge with anyone who asked—but everyone knows that. I could tell how, when I met him for the first time, he bought me dinner—but that was just one small, decent thing he did among many. He always gave his best. He loved his family and his work, and he never gave up.

Jim Hyde
(drummer for Eddie Rabbitt)
Nashville TN

Larrie Londin was a big man with a big heart. I would like to say thanks to Larrie for being a friend who gave me so much of his time, advice, encouragement, and love—not to mention his humor. From the first time I met Larrie in Nashville, some twelve years ago, he was always open to my "brain-picking" about the instrument we both loved, and about the music business in general. I think he actually liked it. He never minded "talking shop."

For those who never got to know Larrie, they missed knowing a wonderful human being. I will miss him terribly. Larrie was a great source of inspiration to me...and he still is.

Ron Thompson
Ft. Worth TX

About six years ago, I was working in a music store that had booked Larrie Londin for a clinic. At the same time, I had just begun my professional drumming career. I was playing at a small club across the street from the motel in which Larrie was staying. Being young, eager, and rather naive, I told my supervisor, "Bring him by the club; he's just across the street!"

Well, sure enough, the night before the clinic, Larrie and my supervisor came strolling in. Needless to say, I was terrified. A *real* drummer! Feeling very humble, I shook Larrie's hand and said, "Hi, my name's Tim." And that was it. They stayed for the next set.

Shortly after they left, I broke the spring assembly on my bass drum pedal, and had to finish the night on a spare that felt like I was trying to push a truck. When I went to the store the next day to find a replacement, Larrie was setting up his drums for the clinic. As I sorted through boxes to no avail, Larrie asked me what I was doing. I told him that I had two afternoon sets to play (and thus had to miss his clinic) and three evening sets later, and that my main pedal was broken.

I had to play the afternoon sets on the spare. But when I returned a couple of hours later for the evening sets, a waitress handed me a pedal spring assembly, saying simply, "This is from a guy named Larrie." At that point, it was like some huge curtain lifted from between myself and every other drummer on the planet. Larrie showed me that drumming is not a competition—it's a tremendous amount of people who can learn from each other and, more often than not, would give you the shirt off their backs (or the spring off their pedals). It was only a small gesture on Larrie's part, but it gave me a greater appreciation for drumming, and for drummers and percussionists everywhere. I'm especially glad that I learned this lesson from Larrie Londin—whether he knew it or not. Goodbye, Larrie—you will be greatly missed.

Tim Prescott
Ft. Walton Beach FL

There was no one in the drumming world like Larrie Londin. His undeniable physical presence—enhanced by those incredible Hawaiian shirts—might evoke a laugh, but his ever-present humor would allow the two of you to laugh together. His dedication to the art of drumming manifested itself in his willingness to share his talent at clinics, shows, and just "on the street." His versatility as a performer had few, if any equals; he was just as comfortable playing a Motown groove, a hard-rock backbeat, or a Nashville shuffle. And he made them *all* sound great!

Perhaps the greatest of Larrie's attributes was his humanity. He was always approachable, always willing to offer sound advice (or a good joke), and always genuinely *interested* in what you might have to say. Besides being one of the finest drummers of his generation, he was just one hell of a guy. I'll miss him a lot.

Rick Van Horn
Clifton NJ

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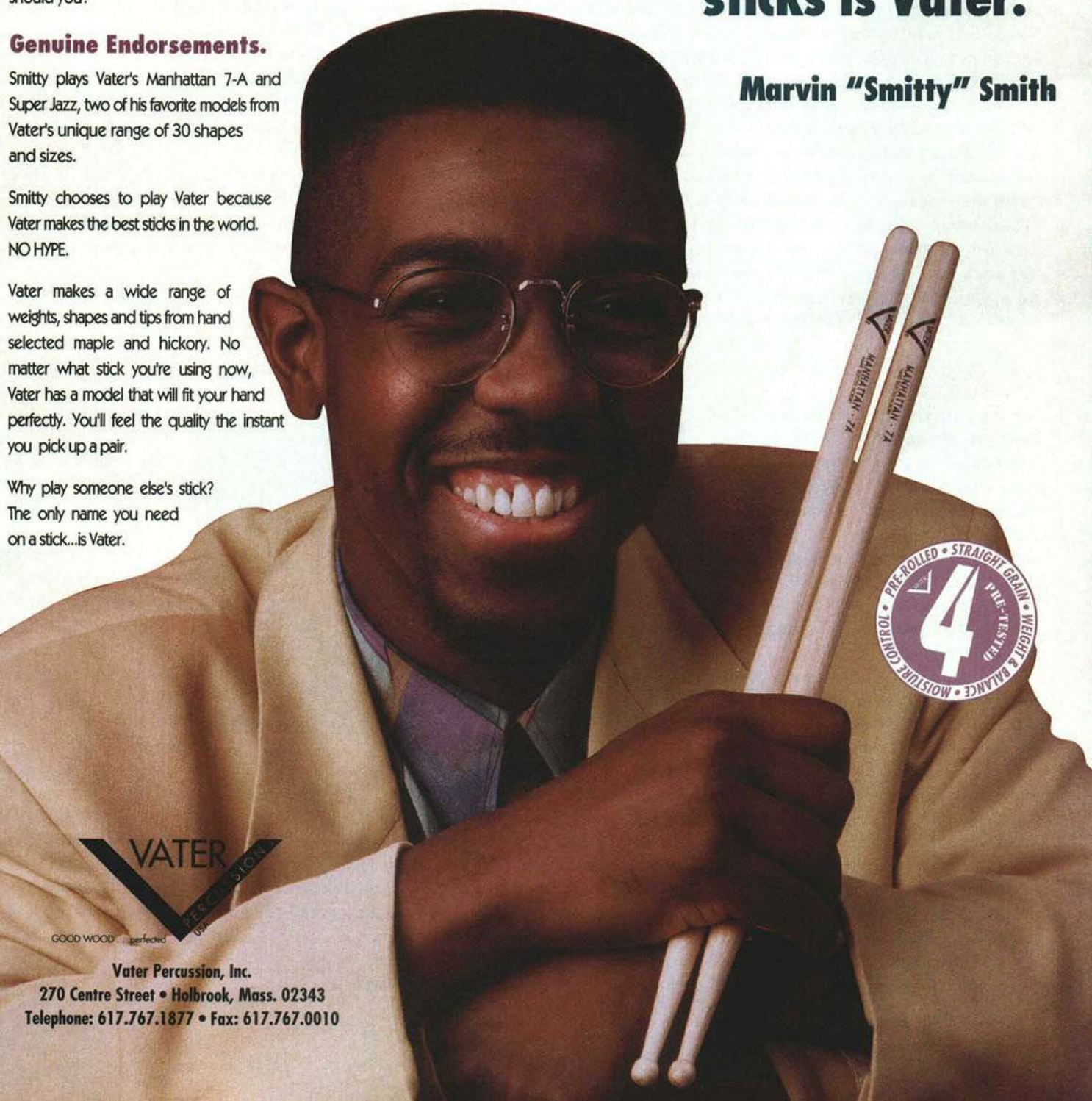
Marvin "Smitty" Smith



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T.S. Monk

The debut album by T.S. Monk, *Take One,* shows tremendous maturity and depth, which is not all that surprising when one discovers that his father was Thelonious Monk. But why did it take the 42-year-old drummer so long to start his jazz career?

"I'm a child of the '60s," Monk replies, "and contrary to popular belief, my father didn't demand that we only listen to Charlie Parker. So I grew up on Jimi Hendrix and the Temptations and Cream, as well as Max Roach and Miles Davis. I played with my father when I was young, but when my father stopped playing, I couldn't find guys my age who could play on that level. So I drifted into R&B and did that for a while."

Monk began taking care of his father's estate in 1983 and became involved with the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz. "That drew me back to this music, which is infectious," he says. "In the process of being a spokesperson for the institute, I found myself in situations where I was a guest performer with people like Clark Terry or Dizzy Gillespie. So I started brushing up on my chops, and I decided to go back to performing, put a band together, and give it a shot in jazz, which I had never done."

A major strength of *Take One* is the strong sense of groove Monk injects into his bop-style drumming. "My R&B playing definitely helped formulate my concept of groove, but also I grew up with Thelonious, and he was a groove guy if there ever was one. When I listen to the classic jazz records, the two things I hear are the groove and memorable melodies. When I used to observe Art Blakey with his bands, Art took great solos, but it was the *groove* of the band that made you love Art Blakey & The Jazz Messengers. Those tunes were swinging so hard and the rhythm section was in the pocket, letting the soloist do his thing and working with him to make a better solo. I don't hear that in a lot of the records from young cats.

"So yeah, I've always wanted to be a groove drummer. Thelonious told me from the beginning that the most important thing a drummer had to do was play the time. If you ain't playing good time and you don't have the groove going, everything else you do is bullshit."

Rick Mattingly

Fritz Lewak

For the past six years, Fritz Lewak has had the drum chair with Melissa Etheridge. "I started playing with Melissa right after the first record," says Fritz. "Craig Krampf played on that one [titled simply *Melissa Etheridge].* I was called to do some shows for a couple of weeks—that was in '86—and I'm *still* on the road." Fritz has also recorded Melissa's last two studio efforts, *Brave And Crazy* and *Never Enough.*

Photo by *Lissa Wales*

According to Fritz, working with Etheridge has been a very challenging experience. "You never know what she is going to do. Plus she is an incredible timekeeper and an outstanding rhythm guitarist. Melissa is very sensitive to what you think and what you want to do, and everybody feels that same vibe."

Pleased with the gig, Fritz says that "2001," "Must Be Crazy," "Keep It Precious," and "Dance Without Sleeping" are some of his favorite songs. "'Dance Without Sleeping' was fun because we all worked on it together; Melissa sort of told us to come up with something, and we just jammed."

One special high point in the show is the *band* drum solo. "It was Melissa's idea," Lewak explains. "Everybody comes up and grabs the sticks and does their thing. We all jam on different parts of the kit. Melissa cues everybody to come in, we build up around the set, and it turns into a drummer's marketplace. It's kind of wild."

As far as the future goes, Fritz is looking forward to eventually doing a live record. "We've always tried to capture some of the 'live-ness' that Melissa does in a show on record, but you can't. You capture something in the studio and it's great. But when we perform it live it's twenty times bigger. Melissa is a performer and could do two hours alone and capture an audience. She goes out there and sings her buns off and people go 'Wow' because she does it from the heart. Melissa can do that alone, but we're giving her a little support."

Lori Spagnardi

Vinny Appice

To Vinny Appice, re-joining Black Sabbath after eleven years away from the band felt even better than the first time. "When I joined the band in 1980, I was just this little kid going into this monster band. At that time, Sabbath was really huge, playing arenas everywhere, and I was naive—and a little intimidated because I was replacing Bill Ward. It was a real learning experience. But after that broke up, Ronnie and I formed Dio and had a lot of success with that band for eight years. I'm much more confident now, so it was different going into the band this time. I felt more on their level. I feel more comfortable to say what I want and play what I want than before. Now it feels like we're creating together."

After leaving Dio, Vinny recorded an album and toured with a fledgling band called WWIII. But when management problems became apparent to Appice, he left the band, only to re-join Sabbath shortly thereafter. "When I got back in touch with Ronnie, he was back with Sabbath with Geezer Butler and Tony Iommi, but Cozy Powell was on drums. About two months later, Cozy got into an accident riding a horse. I then got a call from Ronnie," he says, explaining that they immediately spent the next four months writing the album, *Dehumanizer.*

"It was recorded really raw," Vinny explains. "The nice thing about Mack producing was that he didn't muffle or tape the drums up. It didn't feel like an artificial environment like the studio usually does. We didn't even use noise gates on the toms. So I'm pleased with how the album came out."

Robyn Flans

Billy Johnson and Richard Aguon

Neither Billy Johnson nor Richard Aguon knew who the other player would be when contacted to be a twin-drumming team for Hammer's 1992 *Too Legit* world tour. For both, this created concerns about compatibility of playing styles and ego-driven complications. But when each found out who the other "one" was, their fears disappeared immediately. Both had, in fact, admired each other's playing for years, back home in the San Francisco Bay Area. And from day one of rehearsals, the two just locked. As it turns out now, working together was the highlight of the tour for each drummer.

"It's kind of neat playing off each other and still being simplistic," says the 31-year-old Aguon, who's logged previous gigs and recording time with the Whispers, Paula Abdul, Bobby Brown, and Confunction. He likens their drumistic symbiosis to an "echo concept."

"With two guys, you have to be more conservative," says Johnson, 38, who signed on to Hammer's tour after a brief stint with Santana. "You can't go crazy and play fills all over the place. You have to pick your spots. I've come to know his style without stepping on his toes. If he starts a fill, I know how to finish it, or whether to finish it at all."

While many people show up and expect to hear a drum machine and a DJ, Hammer uses a live band with three keyboardists, a guitarist, a bass player, and Juan Escovedo (Sheila's brother) on percussion—and everyone gets a lot of solo space. Even though there's no sequencing, Johnson and Aguon trigger digital drum samples and arrange their parts to re-create the original drum machine tracks, which can incorporate more than one kick or snare per tune.

Johnson, whose credits include Frankie Beverly & Maze, Patti LaBelle, Dianne Reeves, and Philadelphia childhood friend George Howard, says pacing himself is the most demanding part of the tour, which started in Hampton, Virginia last April and took them to Mexico, the Caribbean, Europe, and Southeast Asia. "You have to keep yourself together," he says. "You can't just go out and party and think you're going to coast the next night. The level of musicianship and energy in the band is too high for that. Also, you can't skate through the show with another drummer who is hot. You *have* to be right on it."

Charles Levin

News...

Michael Baker is currently working live with Whitney Houston. He can also be heard on the Joe Zawinul Syndicate's *Lost Tribes,* Norman Brown's *Just Between Us,* Gerald Veasley's recent release, *Looking Ahead* (playing on three tracks and singing on one), on a couple of tracks of Dwight Sills' latest LP, and on Bobby Lyle's most recent album.

Waldo LaTowsky can be heard on Suzy Bogguss's Christmas release. Last year he recorded with Michelle Shocked *(Arkansas Traveler),* Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown, Frank Frost (piano on one track as well), Homesick James, and Mary-Ann Brandon.

John Ferraro is on Larry Carlton's recent recording. He has been working on the road with him as well. (Earlier last year he was touring with George Benson.)

Craig Kratnpf can be heard on Matraca Berg's recent album.

Jim Keltner recorded with Mark Cohn, Rickie Lee Jones, Rod Stewart, Willie Nelson, a couple of tracks for Vonda Shepherd, one track each for the Beach Boys, Mick Jagger, David Crosby, and Chris Isaak, the theme for TV's "Mad About You," music for the film *Trespass,* and Tom Petty's Christmas song with he and Stan Lynch playing double drums.

Mike Terrana working with Yngvie Malmsteen.

Ron Thompson on a duet with Willie Nelson called "These Eyes" on Ray Wylie Hubbard's *Lost Train Of Thought.*

John Molo on Bruce Hornsby's new album. He also recorded with Liquid Jesus, has been doing some

continued on page 57

Below you find what is commonly called a win win situation.

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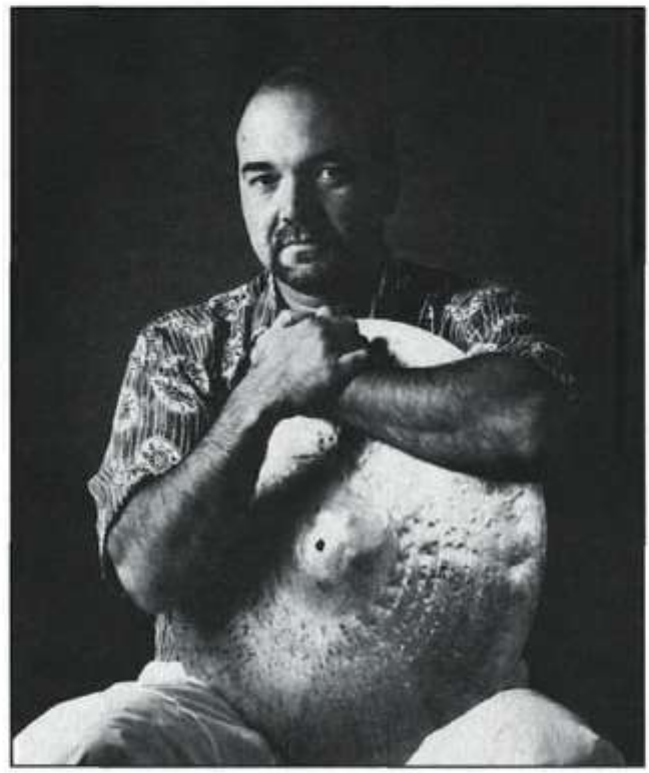
Prestige Custom

Peter Erskine

Q You are one of my favorite drummers in the jazz/fusion scene, along with Jack DeJohnette, Dave Weckl, and Marvin "Smitty" Smith. I've heard you on such albums as *Star, Modern Times,* and *Bass Desires.* I've heard you play with John Abercrombie, and then five minutes later I've heard you with Bob Mintzer's big band. I've never heard records with more creative drumming. How is it possible to sound so different in different bands? And also, how important is it for you to work with rudiments on the snare drum alone?

Rico Majchrzak
Plauen, Germany



A Thank you for your compliments. The best way to answer your question, I think, is to state that almost every type of music has some element of another style or type of music in it. In other words, the discipline of one style of playing can help you with another style. For example, playing "jingles" or commercial music requires very disciplined playing choices and strict attention to the time. These are useful qualities to draw upon when playing "free" music—albeit you must treat each specific circumstance/musical setting in its own right. That requires listening and being stylistically *aware.* Likewise, playing in a big band demands a responsibility to the ensemble. And while a trio setting does, too, the roles are clearly different. It's a matter of honoring the music—its traditions *and* its possibilities. You must also remember to use the appropriate touch and dynamics for each kind of music you play. What it comes down to is, if you like a kind of music, then it should be in your head and heart, and it shouldn't be too big of a deal to get it into your hands.

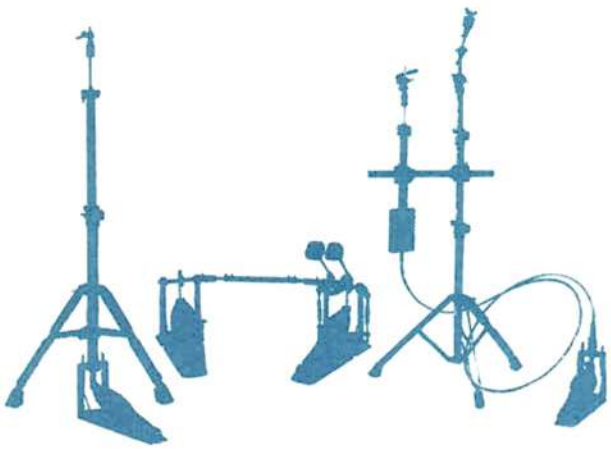
Yes, it is important to be able to play your basic rudiments and stickings (such as rolls, single- and double-stroke combinations, and flams) well. More and more I am discovering the benefit of warming up and utilizing basic rudiments—however, I do not consciously choose a particular rudiment for a specific fill, pattern, etc. Remember that drumming is a combination of your fingers, hands, arms—and ears! Good luck, and my thanks for listening to all of that different music.

Tim "Herb" Alexander

Q First, I'd like to thank you and the rest of Primus for putting out such worthwhile music in this dreadful glam-rock age. Now to my questions: On your records you are a very precise and imaginative drummer. On some of your songs ("Frizzle Fry," "Fish On," etc.) you incorporate your tom-toms into the groove instead of just the customary hi-hat, bass drum, and snare. Could you share any tips on how you come up with these patterns and the drum parts of the rest of the songs? And what drums are you using?

Joey Scagnoli
Muncie IN

A Thanks for the kind words, Joey. When coming up with drum patterns, I don't like to do what's been done already—although sometimes, the most perfect sound to use for a song *is* the hi-hat, bass drum, and snare combination. It's all up to the drummer and the band to determine what fits. I think that coming up with tom rhythms has a lot to do with your philosophy towards drums, and I have a couple of things I like to think about first when writing songs. First, most music has a pulse. Identify that pulse, then feel that pulse. You don't have to *display* the pulse in a 2/4 fashion; that's up to you. You could accent the 1, 2, 3, and 4 of each measure if you want (or every other measure, and so on) with different toms—or any sound, really. Everything in the set can keep time or a groove. What's appropriate for *you* is what's most important, and you don't have to do what everyone else does. For some inspiration, check out music that approaches songs and rhythms in a different manner: world music from anywhere, or perhaps some more accessible music like Peter Gabriel, the Police, some reggae—anything that's different from the standard rhythmic format. Finally, to answer your last question: Right now I'm using Pork Pie Percussion drums.



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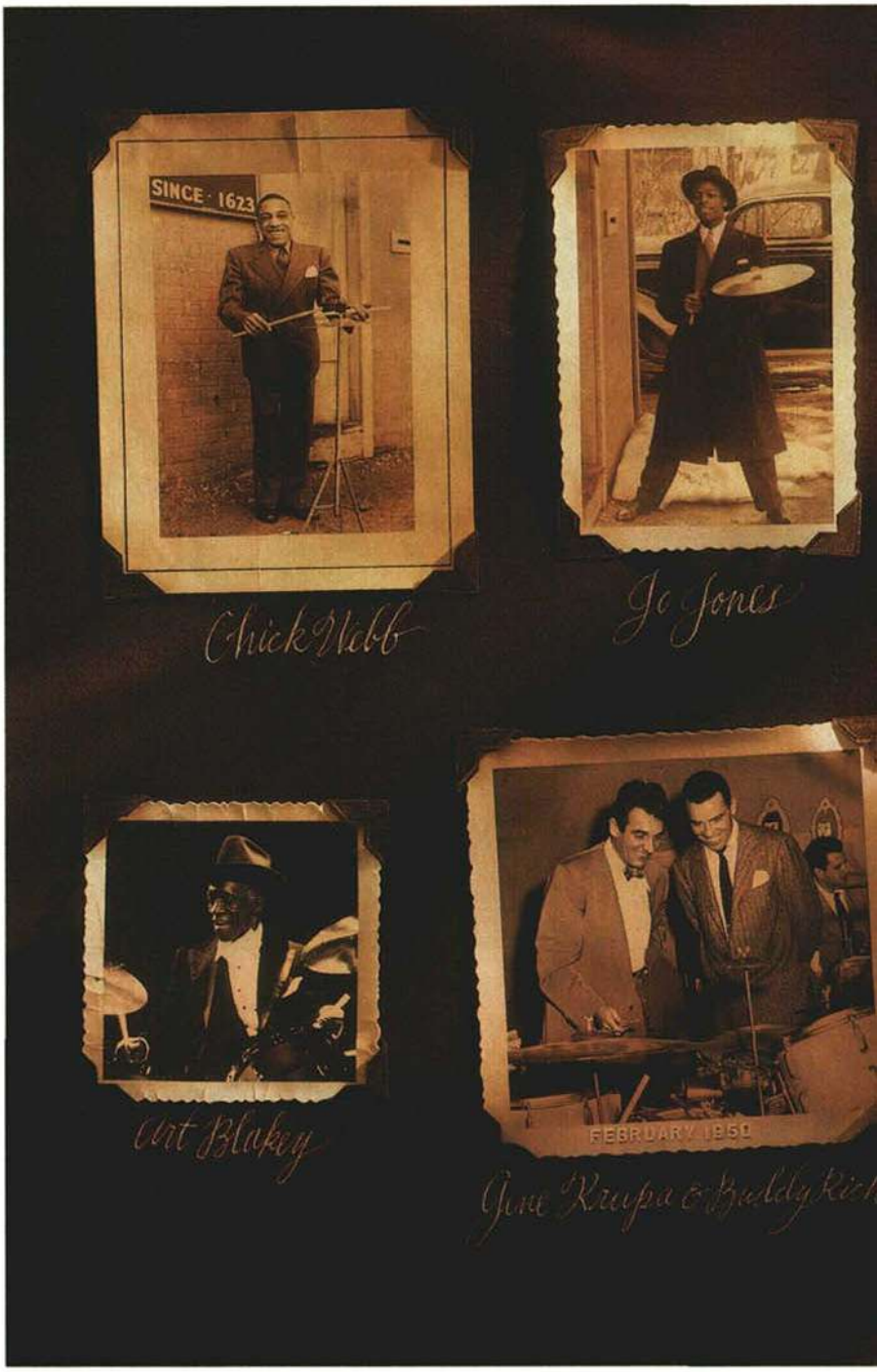

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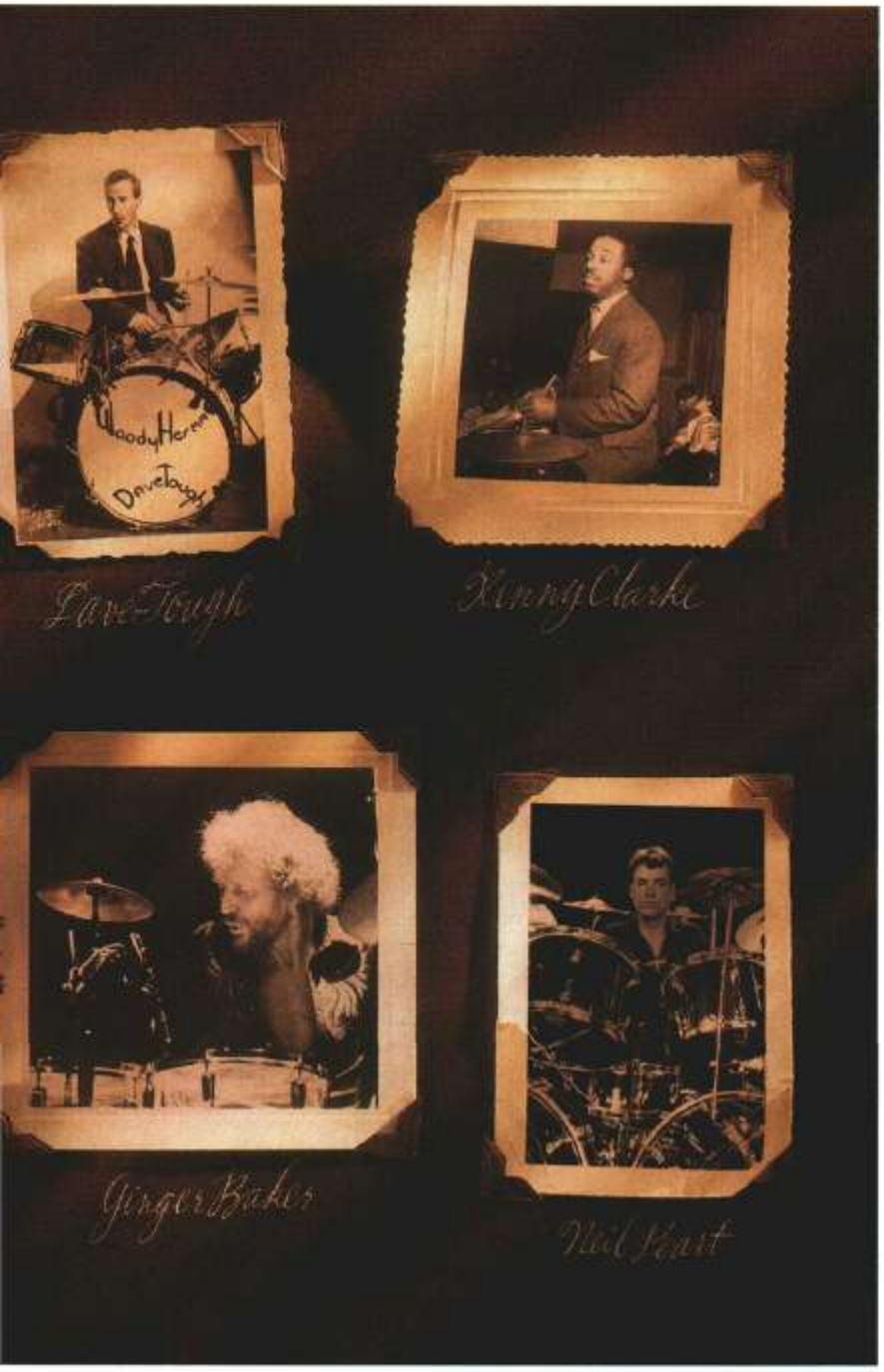

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BLACK HARDWARE

Q On a lot of kits I see, there is black hardware—especially from Tama and Drum Workshop. Is this hardware custom-finished? If so, how much does it cost and how can I obtain it?

Matt Harris
Bangor ME

A Generally speaking, when you see black (or other colored) hardware, that hardware has been colorized on a custom basis. Occasionally, major drum companies offer colored hardware for a limited time, generally as a promotional item. (Tama is currently offering a special "Lars Ulrich Signature Series" drumkit with black hardware, for example.) You'd need to check with your drumshop to investigate the cost of such promotional items.

As an alternative to buying new colored hardware, it is possible to have your existing hardware colorized. A company called Colorlife specializes in this service, and offers a variety of colors and textured finishes. *(MD* did a story on Colorlife in the August 1992 issue.) You can contact the company at 131 Engineer Dr., Hicksville, NY 11801, tel. (516) 433-1222, fax (516) 433-1221.

BUDDY RICH FAN CLUB

Q I've always enjoyed the music of Buddy Rich and his band. His death was one of the drumming world's greatest losses. Can you tell me if there are any groups formed to promote the appreciation of this drummer and his music?

Thomas Hernandez
Phoenix AZ

A There certainly is. You can contact the very active Buddy Rich Fan Club by writing P.O. Box 2014, Warminster, PA 18974.

MYSTERY YAMAHAS

Q A few months ago I bought a used set of Yamaha drums. They're in fine condition, but I don't know what series they are. I believe they were the line that evolved into the *RTC* series—could they be the *Turbo Tour?* The model number on the bass drum is *BD822T.* The mounted toms are 12 x 12 and 13 x 13, and I'd love to add an 8" and a 10" tom to the set. The finish is an orange-redish stain. What is the name of this finish? Does the "red maple" *Maple Custom* finish or the "cherry wood" *Recording Custom* finish match it? Could I possibly order a matching finish, if I find one, on an *RTC* shell? What are my options?

Shane Fowlkes
Glen Allen VA

A According to Yamaha's Jay Wanamaker: "The drumset you have is a *Turbo Tour Custom* in the 'redwood' finish. This series used a birch/mahogany shell with lacquered finishes. The particular finish you speak of is a redwood stain covered with clear lacquer. None of our existing colors matches that finish. However, we would be able to special-order that drum by using a *Rock Tour Custom (RTC)* shell and the old *Tour* lugs and badges.

"Thanks very much for your positive comments about Yamaha drums. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Dave Ksycki at Yamaha, 3445 East Paris Ave. S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49512-0899."

SOLID-WOOD SNARE DRUMS

Q Can you tell me if Solid Percussion, the company that originally made Select snare drums, has gone out of business? I wrote to them at their Watsonville, CA address, and my letter was returned.

I understand that Noble & Cooley and Tama make steam-bent solid wood snares, and that Brady makes solid-wood drums of block construction. What other companies make solid-wood drums? And has anyone ever tried making a snare drum completely carved out of a section of tree trunk, without any cuts or piecing at all?

E.W. Paulette
Lynchburg VA

A To answer your questions in order: Yes, Solid Percussion went out of business a few years ago. The company was originally named Select Snare Drums, but ran into trademark conflict and was forced to change its name to Solid Percussion. Although the drums were excellent, they were quite expensive, and the company was unable to sustain itself on its limited sales.

In addition to the companies you mention, steam-bent solid-shell *Radio King* snare drums are once again available from Slingerland, and stave construction drums in a variety of woods (including oak and cardinal wood) are offered by the Kenner Drum Company. Brady offered completely solid snare drums carved from a section of tree trunk at one time, but found them too expensive to manufacture to be marketable on a practical basis. There is, however, a company in Japan called Canopus, who offer the *Zelkova* snare drum, which is hollowed out from a section of a Zelkova tree. For further information, contact Canopus Co., Ltd., 3-41-20 Matsubara, Setagaya-Ku, Tokyo, Japan #156.

DRUM SOFTWARE

Q I am still using an E-mu *SP12* drum machine, and I recently purchased a Macintosh *Classic II* computer. I remember reading in your magazine a few years ago about software made for the Macintosh that has the ability to save and load the *SP12* sounds. I would like to know if this software is compatible with my computer and, if it is, where I

continued on page 58

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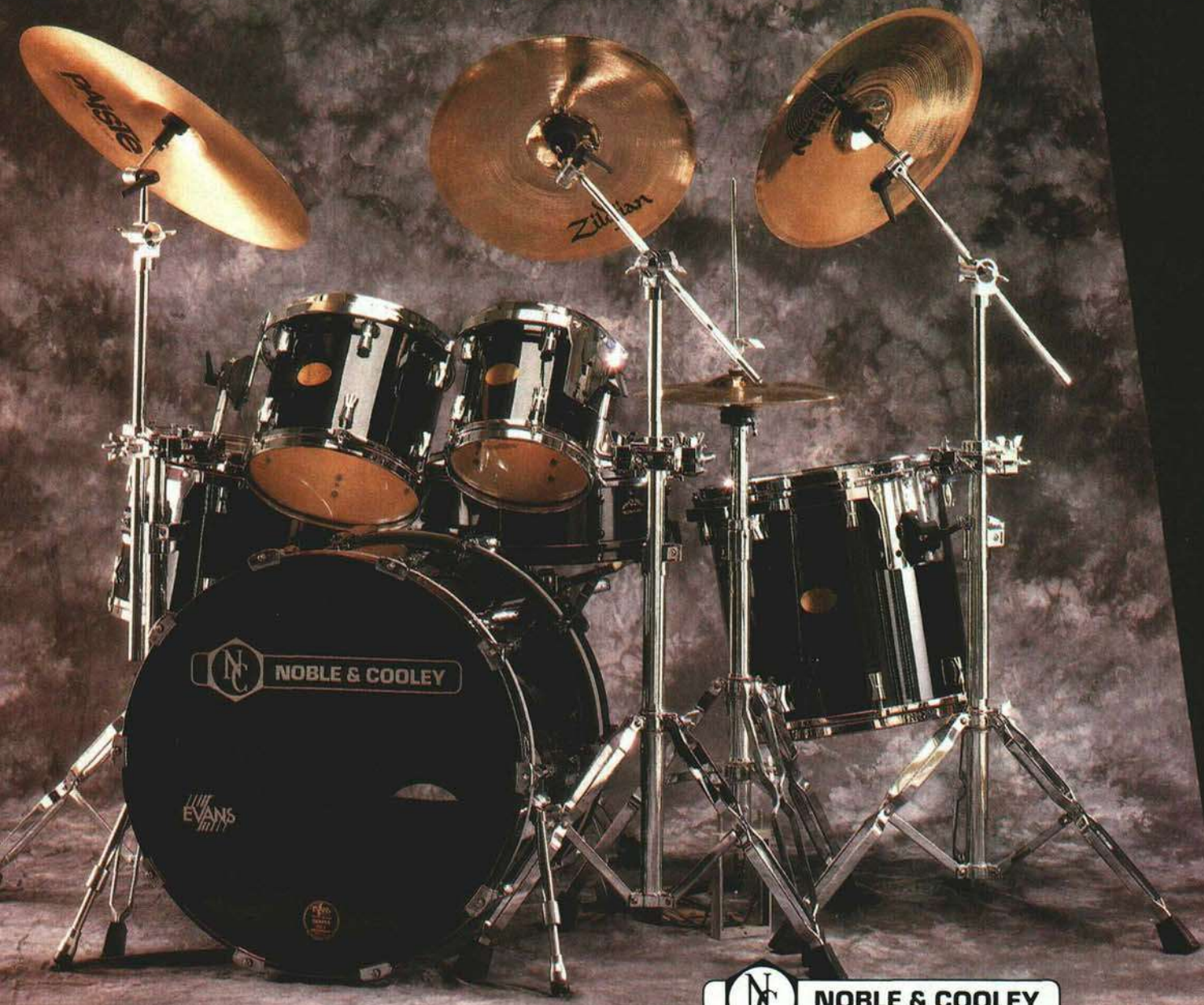

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The remaining artists scheduled to appear at this year's Festival will be announced in upcoming issues of *MD*, and will include more of contemporary drumming's premier performers.

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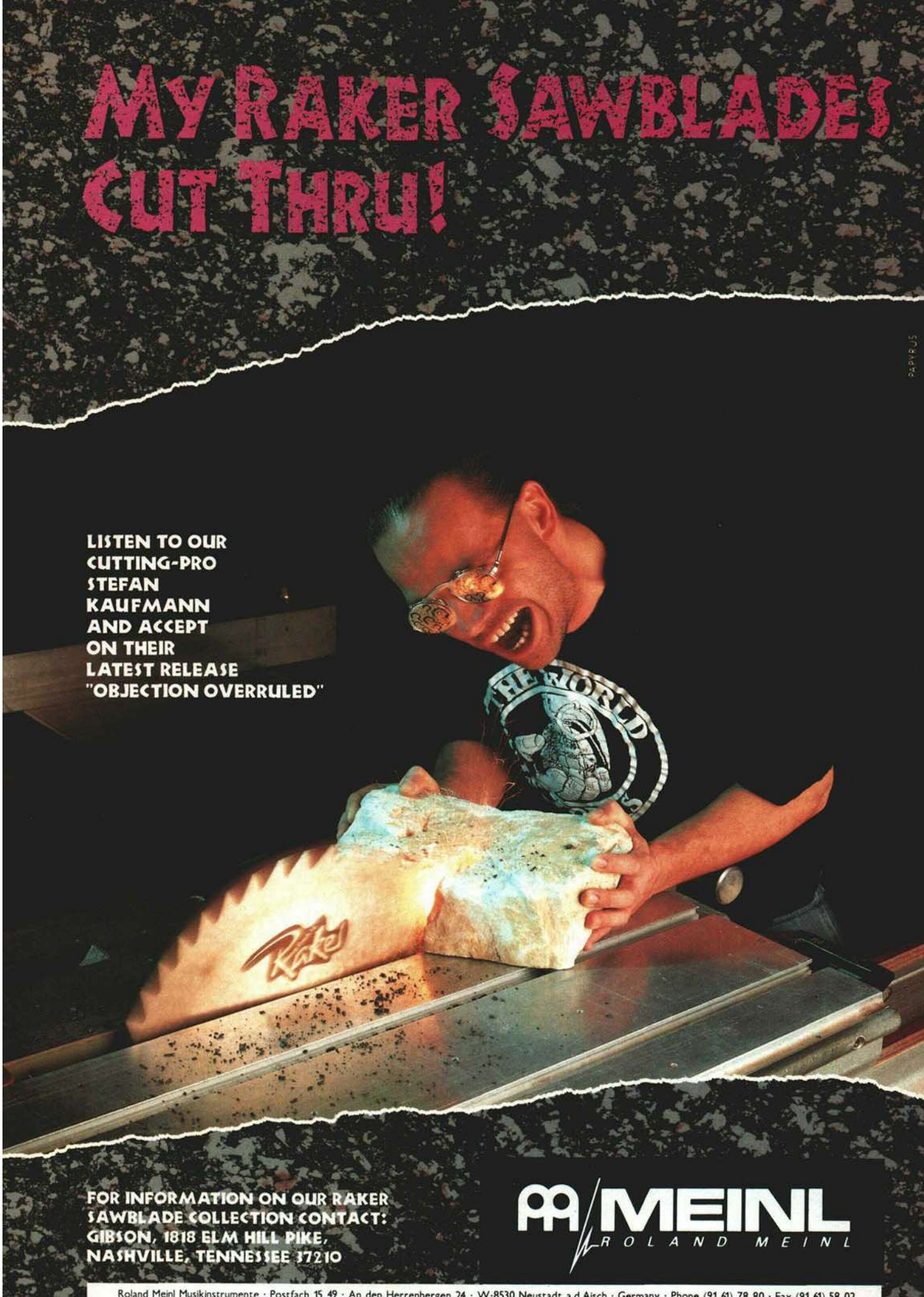

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PROLONGING CYMBAL LIFE

When the center holes in cymbals—especially hi-hats—get misshaped due to wear (to the point where the holes are egg-shaped, or worse), the cymbals are usually retired. I've devised a system to save them. Take a rubber washer like the one used on Aquarian *Cymbal Springs* (3/8" thick) and super-glue it to the underside of the hole—being sure to center it. This, in effect, gives the cymbal a new hole, thereby preventing it from "sloshing around" on the cymbal tilter or hi-hat clutch. I've been using a top hi-hat cymbal in this manner for two years—with one setup and breakdown per week—and the super glue hasn't given out yet. Also, when I put the cymbal on the clutch, I don't add a felt washer under it; the rubber washer serves the purpose perfectly.

Jerry Siegel
Baltimore MD

MARKING CYMBAL STANDS

Setting up a drumkit is time-consuming enough without having to wrestle with telescoping cymbal stands to find the most comfortable playing height. I tried just about every method for marking the perfect height on my stands, from placing colored tape on the tube section (which is unsightly and slides off when the stand is collapsed) to magic marker (which cannot be erased if you ever decide to change the stand height). I finally found the perfect solution in an art supply store: crayon-like wax pencils called China Markers.

The China Markers' wax writing adheres well to the metallic finish on most cymbal stand tubing (it also works well on tom stands without memory locks) and will not rub off when the stand is collapsed. However, if you ever decide to change the height of the stand, a few brisk rubs with a dry towel will erase the mark. An occasional touch-up after repeated setups and breakdowns is all that is needed. China Markers are quite inexpensive and are available in different colors to complement your drumkit's finish and/or be as inconspicuous as possible. Using different colors might also help you "code" the various components of your kit for easy assembly.

Stephan Nigohosian
Haworth NJ

IMPROVING BALANCED PLAYING

Here's a simple practice tip that all drummers should try at least once. The idea is to make sure you're not favoring either hand when you play. Before every practice session, focus on just the snare drum while playing a simple 8th-note pattern. Assuming you are using fairly evenly weighted sticks and your snare head is properly tuned, you should hear little or no difference between your left- and right-hand strokes. For maximum effect, close your eyes and alternate the left and right patterns, using different rudiments, speeds, and intensities. I sometimes record myself doing this exercise to evaluate objectively whether I can hear the change from right to left. You should *not* be able to hear the change. By the way, if you play double bass, this exercise applies to the feet as well.

Eric Van Gogh
Smithtown NY

DEVELOPING STAMINA ON DOUBLE BASS

When I first started playing double bass, I noticed that my legs would get tired very easily. It seemed that the few hours a day I had to practice would be used up just trying to build up my leg speed and coordination. Then my dad gave me some ankle weights. They were designed to strap onto the leg just above the ankle and below the calf. I used them every day for about two weeks while practicing. When I took the weights off and played normally, my legs felt light as a feather. I believe that the use of ankle weights will help to speed up the process of getting your legs used to playing double bass.

Cody Lee
Fort Worth TX

EMERGENCY DRUMHEAD REPAIR

My rock band was playing at a club recently, and we were louder than usual for some reason. I was using a 16x30 oversize bass drum at the time. In the middle of the third song I felt the pedal go through the head. The front head had a sound hole cut into it, so I couldn't use that—and of course, I didn't have a spare 30" head. But I realized that I did have some clear packing tape from a record warehouse where I work. We took a quick break and I applied the tape to both sides of the drumhead. It took a beating, got me through the night, and didn't come off at all. I've also used this tape to temporarily repair minor holes in the bottom snare head when needed. It's much thinner than duct tape, so it has less of a muffling effect, but it's just as strong and adhesive. Clear 3M *Scotch #373* is a good, strong brand.

Wally Gunn
Cleveland OH

Note: The tips presented in Drumline *are suggestions based on the personal experience of individual drummers, and are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by* Modern Drummer *magazine.* Modern Drummer *cannot guarantee that any problem will be solved by any* Drumline *suggestion, and cannot be responsible for any damage to equipment or personal injury resulting from the utilization of any such suggestion. Readers are encouraged to consider each suggestion carefully before attempting to utilize any* Drumline *tip.*

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Photo *by Lissa Wales*

Larrie Londin Remembered

By Robyn Flans

It is impossible to fathom a world without Larrie Londin. Everything about him was big—his personality, his heart, his body, his sentimentality.

I first met Larrie at Zildjian Day in Los Angeles back in 1983. He turned out to be the surprise of the day. He blew us all away with technique that had never been revealed on the many platinum-selling country records he performed on.

Soon after, I was assigned to interview Larrie for *Modern Drummer*. In my preparation, I realized Nashville had been fortunate that Larrie had settled there, for his background had been in Detroit, recording for Motown.

"He was one of the most gifted people that I have ever known."
—Dolly Parton

But since documentation of his work there was nowhere to be found, for his interview Larrie wanted to concentrate on his later years. Some of these later recordings are classics: "Amos Moses" and "When You're Hot, You're Hot" by Jerry Reed, "Jolene" and "I Will Always Love You" by Dolly Parton, "Sometimes When We Touch" by Dan Hill, "Seven Year Ache" and "My Baby Thinks He's A Train" by Rosanne Cash, "Family Tradition" and "Whiskey Bent And Hell Bound" by Hank Williams, Jr., "Swinging" by John Anderson, "My Baby's Got Good Timing" by Dan Seals, "On The Other Hand" by Randy Travis, and "She's Mine" and "Foolish Heart" by Steve Perry. There are so many more, but unfortunately, Larrie got lazy about documenting song titles during the last nine years.

At the time of his death, Larrie was working on a mostly instrumental record. Fittingly, the drumming is being completed by his son Sean, and the cover is being designed by Larrie's other son, Shannon. Larrie was very proud of this nearly all-instrumental album, which spans many styles, including big band, jazz, rock, Latin, and two Presley remakes that Larrie actually sang on.

Photo by Lissa Wales

Larrie was also a dynamic live performer. Seeing him play double bass with Adrian Belew was another amazement. Then, later in his career, seeing him execute the perfect parts behind the Everly Brothers provided more than one joyous evening for me.

I feel fortunate to have seen Larrie play on so many occasions, but mostly I feel privileged to have known the man. I have always been aware that in the entertainment industry, superficiality runs rampant—people pretend to be your friend to further themselves. Larrie Londin is one of the only people I have genuinely called a friend—a person I could count on, someone I laughed and cried with, and someone who shared his humor and tears with me. He was someone who called just to shoot the shit.

Most of those interviewed for this article said the same thing—that the importance of Larrie's friendship far exceeded the business relationship they had with him. The consensus was that Larrie was always there for people. Kenny Aronoff recalls being very nervous at his first Zildjian Day in Chicago, and how Larrie was encouraging and supportive.

There are countless stories about Larrie at clinics and how he always had time to talk to a young player. Bassist David Hungate recounts a touching story: "My thirteen-year-old son, Noah, is a drummer, and Larrie was his hero. Last year, while playing a concert with his school stage band, my son's bass drum beater got caught in his pant leg during a drum feature. He handled the problem well at the time, but afterward he thought it was the end of the world. I told Larrie about that, and he came over the next afternoon. He told me, in front of Noah, that "the damnedest thing had happened on a session that morning"—he'd gotten his bass drum beater caught in his pant leg. He then spent an hour and a half giving my son a drum lesson. Larrie was one of a kind."

Larrie's story begins October 15, 1943 in Norfolk, Virginia, when Ralph Gallant was born. Raised in Miami and Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, he began playing drums at age fifteen. Incredibly, he was told by his high school band director that he would never make it as a drummer. It

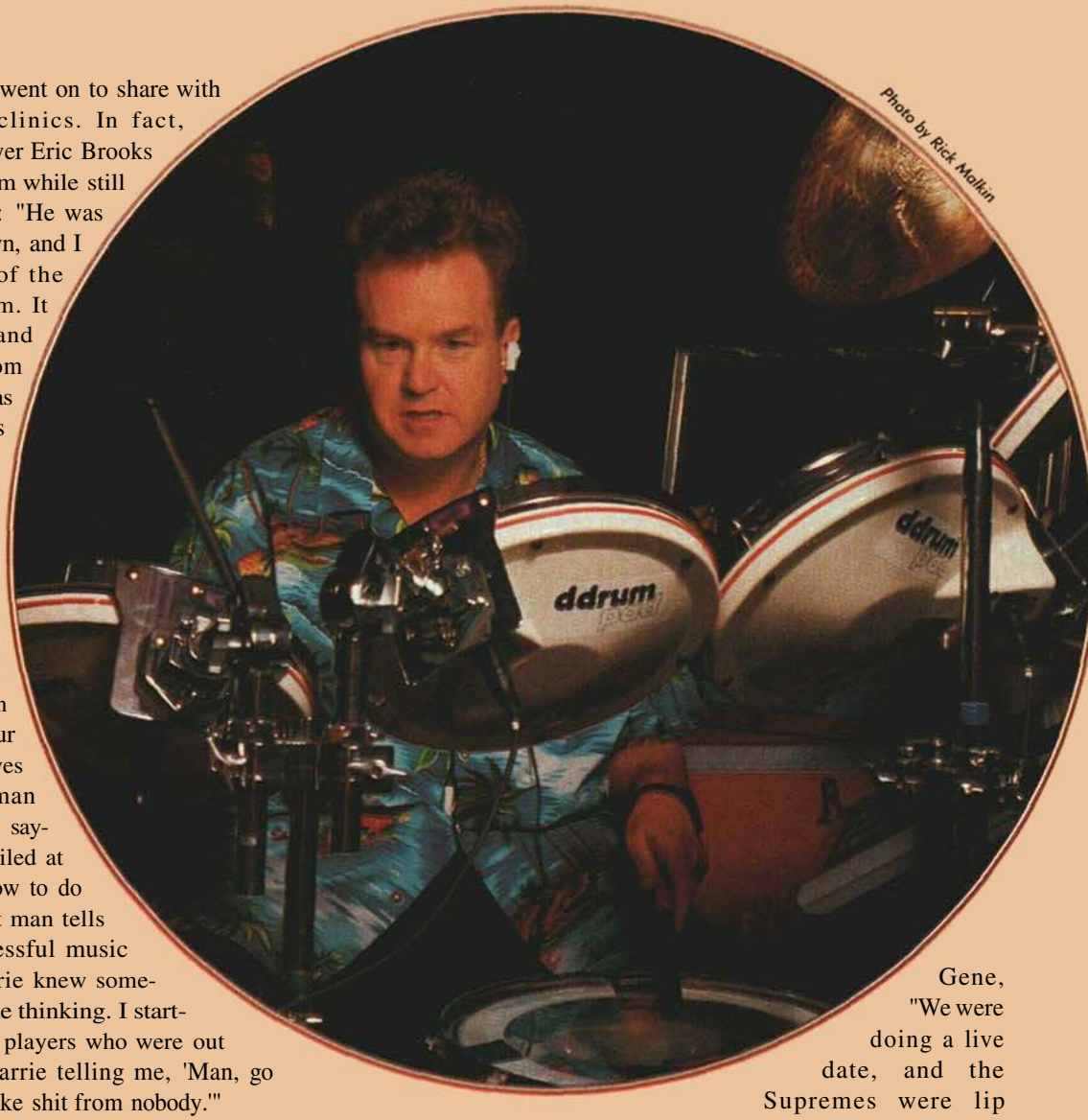

Photo by Rick Malkin

provided a lesson that Larrie went on to share with others years later in his clinics. In fact, Nashville session trumpet player Eric Brooks recalls how Larrie inspired him while still a sophomore in high school: "He was doing a clinic in my hometown, and I was standing at the back of the room, just captivated by him. It began to thin out a little, and Larrie dismissed himself from the group of musicians he was with, walked all the way across the store to where I was standing, and walked right up to me. 'So what do you play?' I said I was a trumpet player, and he asked why a trumpet player would come hear him play. I said, 'Because I want to play recording sessions for a living.' He said, 'Really? I can tell you how to do that. Is your band director here?' I said yes and pointed him out. The man couldn't hear a word we were saying, but Larrie waved and smiled at him. 'I'm going to tell you how to do it. Don't listen to a thing that man tells you, and you'll have a successful music career.' I knew then that Larrie knew something I didn't, and it started me thinking. I started seeking out other trumpet players who were out there *doing* it. I remember Larrie telling me, 'Man, go make your own place. Don't take shit from nobody.'"

Which is exactly what Larrie did. Paying no attention to his band director, Larrie began working in a band called the Headliners. Gene Bunten, the bass player for the group, recalls how Ralph Gallant became Larrie Londin.

"In Florida, you could work in bars if you were under eighteen if you had a legal guardian. He was fifteen and I was twenty, so I had to become his brother. In order to pick a name, we thumbed through a phone book. I stuck my finger in and it landed on London. We couldn't have that, so we changed that last "o" to "i," and we thought the alliteration of Lonnie and Larrie would work. We applied for social security numbers, and we falsified a couple of birth certificates in our new names to get what was called a cafe card. After that, no one bothered us."

The Headliners were a reasonably successful nightclub act, and one of the cities they frequented was Detroit. It was there, one summer afternoon, that they performed on a local TV show, sharing the bill with the Supremes. According to Gene, "We were doing a live date, and the Supremes were lip syncing. Diana Ross was impressed and brought Berry Gordy out to the nightclub where we worked. Within two months, we were signed to Motown. We were the first white act on the label, but they didn't know quite what to do with *us.* They never did let us go in the direction we thought we should be headed.

"Larrie got recognized for the talent he was when we were doing a Motown review at the Fox Theatre in Detroit. All the acts were there—the Temptations, the Four Tops, Smokey Robinson. One night the drummer for the back-up band went off and lost track of time. When the Supremes came out, opening with 'Where Did Our Love Go,' there was no drummer. We were standing backstage and I just said to Larrie, *'Go,* get up there.' The tune was dragging way down because there were no drums. He jumped on, brought it back up, and gained a lot of respect that night."

Larrie didn't particularly enjoy talking about his Motown days, because the creative process was erratic. According to

"He was as great a person as he was a player. I loved him dearly."
—Jerry Reed

"He played with such a terrific feel. He was great in the studio because he tried so hard to please."-ChetAtkins

stories Larrie had relayed in the past, the musicians would be asked to play grooves, and the songs would be created later. He was never quite sure what hits he was on and what session ended up being what song. He was cutting historical gems—but under ridiculous conditions, for ridiculous money. Mike Baird recalls a story Larrie told him about one recording session: "Larrie and I got the chance to hang one night, and he was talking about the song 'Baby Love.' They recorded it at Hitsville, which was a very, very small room—about the size of a garage. And on this one, everything was being done at once. The room was so full of people that there really wasn't room for Larrie to be in the room. His drum stool and his butt and the back end of his kit, hi-hat and so forth, were outside the back door of the studio in a puddle of water while it was raining, and they were cutting the track. Everything was all wet!"

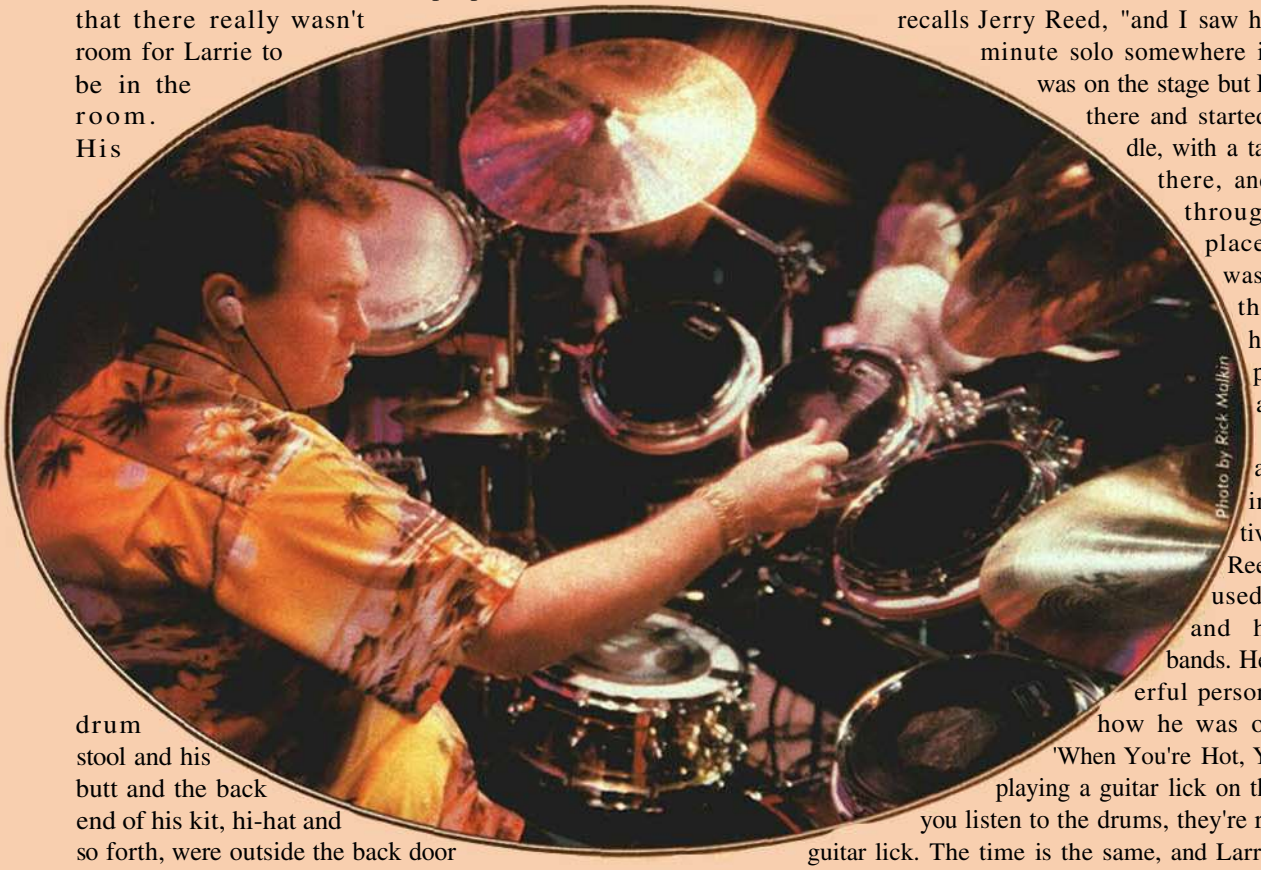
Photo by Rick Malkin

For about half of the three-and-a-half years the Headliners were signed to the label, Larrie worked as a session drummer for Motown. When their record contract terminated, the Headliners continued on for a while. One gig from this period was at a golf tournament in Fort Worth, Texas. Boots Randolph and Chet Atkins sat in with them that night, and Atkins prompted Larrie to consider moving to Nashville. When Larrie moved his family there, he worked with Boots and Atkins, as well as on whatever studio jobs Atkins—then Vice President of Nashville Operations at RCA—could throw his way.

Atkins, a man of few words, had this to say about why he convinced Larrie to move to Nashville: "I thought he was a great drummer, and I loved his playing. He played with such a terrific feel. He was great in the studio because he tried so hard to please. He was a big bear of a guy, and he always brought a lot of happiness to the studio when he came in."

Larrie attributed his eventual success as a session player to recordings like Jerry Reed's "Amos Moses" and "When You're Hot, You're Hot," because they were some of the first Nashville recordings that allowed the drums to be heard in a vital, vibrant way.

"I first saw Larrie when he was with Boots Randolph," recalls Jerry Reed, "and I saw him do a twenty-minute solo somewhere in Iowa. Nobody was on the stage but Larrie. He sat out there and started with a paradiddle, with a tap here and a tap there, and before he was through, he had the place screaming. He was a power from the Universe that humanity was powerless to do anything about.

"Larrie was always interested in being innovative and creative," Reed continues. "He used to be a singer, and he listened to bands. He was a very powerful personality, and that's how he was on drums. With 'When You're Hot, You're Hot,' I was playing a guitar lick on the Fender, and if you listen to the drums, they're really cloning that guitar lick. The time is the same, and Larrie just painted it. He was one of a kind. He was to drums what Walt Disney was to animation. And he was as great a person as he was a player. I loved him dearly, and my life has lost something now."

Songwriter Randy Goodrum, Reed's keyboardist in 1973, says he got to know Larrie in the studio on sessions produced by Chet Atkins. "Some of the most memorable ones were those eventful albums with Les Paul," he recalls. "I played a lot of sessions with Larrie, and he was a born psychologist. He was able to go into a studio and add such charisma. He was a combination of Billy Graham, Willard Scott, and Don Rickles. Les Paul is sort of a sharp wit, and he and Larrie spent the whole time exchanging banter. They kept everybody loose and kept the music urgent and vital. It seemed more of a party than

a record. The fact that we cut ten songs was sort of incidental," Goodrum laughs.

One of the artists Larrie worked with the earliest was Dolly Parton (beginning in 1966, she figures). She was also the one that Larrie would get a sparkle in his eye about, repeatedly saying how she was the cream of the crop, his favorite of all time. "I started working with Larrie when I was with the Porter Wagoner show," Dolly recalls. "Larrie was on those first sessions that I did with Porter, and we became instant friends because I loved his personality. We had a very similar sense of humor; we found humor in the worst of things and the best of things. We could laugh at ourselves, and we could certainly laugh at everyone else around us, because that was one way to get through the day. Some of those musicians, producers, and all the folks back then could be pretty difficult, so we had a good time at their expense.

"I remember Larrie speaking up on my behalf in the studio, due to my being a young girl and a lot of people I was working with being, I would say, male chauvinists. They didn't want me speaking up in any way. Larrie sensed that, because as a friend, we would often talk, and I would express my desire to speak when I knew I wasn't able to. A lot of times I would tell Larrie pretty much what I was looking for at a session. In addition to his knowing what it needed to be, he would often speak on my behalf on many, many of the songs that we did. I really think that Larrie helped me as much as anybody in that respect, because he wasn't afraid of anybody. He would say what he thought whether they liked it or not. And he was so good at what he did that they respected it and would listen to him.

"Larrie brought to my music what I think he brought to everybody's music in Nashville," Parton continues. "He was one of the most gifted people that I have ever known in my life, in addition to being one of the most spiritual and wonderful people that I've known. I always said he was anointed; that's the best way that I know how to describe that kind of talent. He seemed to feel it. He was a big ol' guy, as you know, and he felt every drop of music through every cell of his body. If I was singing about a feather, he became a feather. If I was singing about an anvil, he became an anvil. I know that 'Jolene' and 'I Will Always Love You' were two of Larrie's very favorite songs. He often referred to those through the years. He brought a lot to those early songs."

Another one of Larrie's all-time highlights was in 1976, when he was asked to fill in for Ron Tutt with Elvis Presley for a tour. Then on Presley's last tour, when Tutt was called away on an emergency, Larrie flew to Cincinnati to play the last two performances that Presley ever gave.

"Even though it was the king of rock 'n' roll, the tour was handled in kind of a scattered way," recalls Tony Brown, then guitarist and current executive vice president and head of A&R for MCA/Nashville. "When Larrie flew in, there was nobody to meet him at the airport, and he had to rent something like five or six checkered cabs to put all his cases in. If you've ever seen his drumkit, you know he had these massive cases. He pulled up at the arena in Cincinnati with all these cabs and unloaded his drums, and he was burning. Then he had to spend a few minutes outside trying to get in. He was *steaming"* Brown laughs. "I'm glad I got to see Elvis react to Larrie Londin, because Elvis loved drums so much. Ronnie Tutt is a real powerful drummer, but there was something about Larrie that was *so* powerful. To be able to experience two nights of Larrie playing behind him was a trip. I think those last two nights, Elvis ended up playing to Larrie as much as he did to the audience."

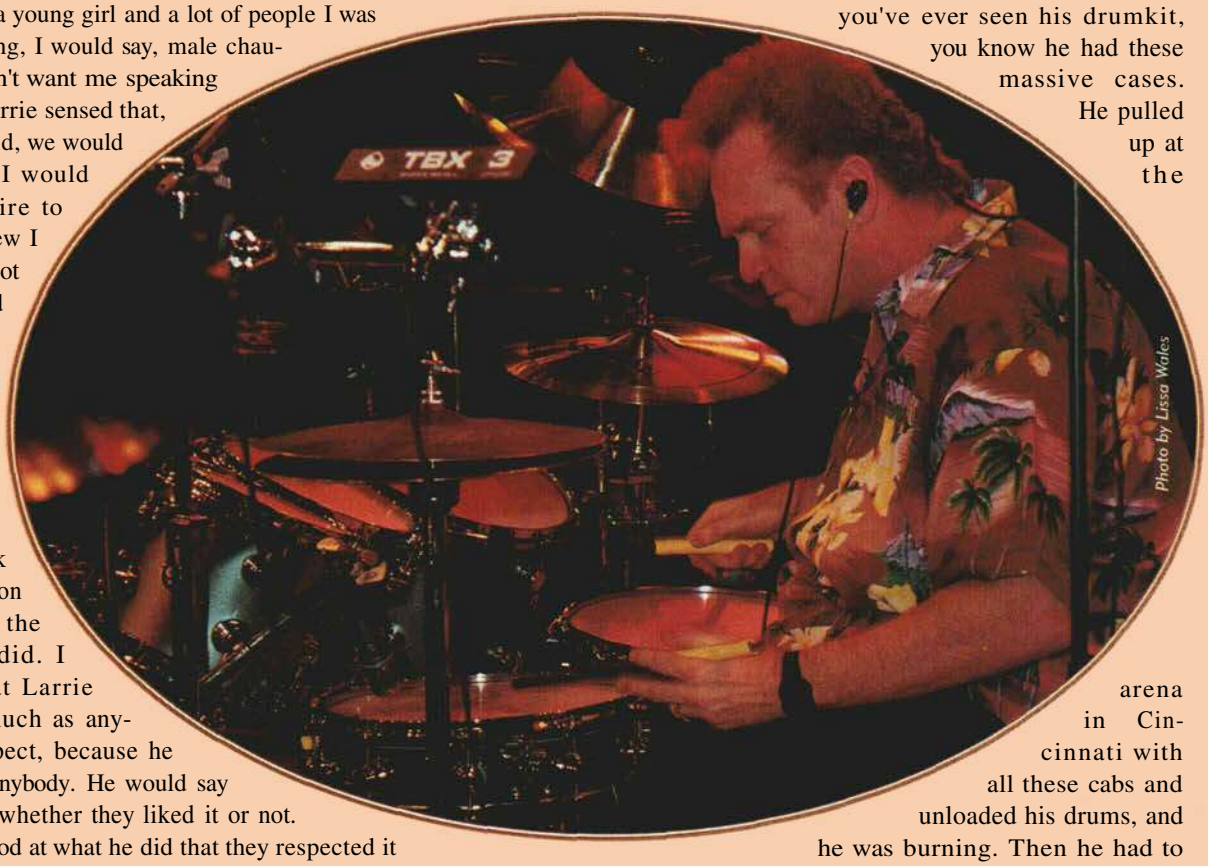

Photo by Lissa Wales

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"Some guys can just play certain grooves, but Larrie played every one."
—Vince Gill

Stephen Perkins

Drum Addiction

By Matt Peiken

Photos by Aldo Mauro

When Jane's Addiction dissolved early last year—prematurely, in most fans' eyes—Stephen Perkins probably was the only person alive who saw the bigger picture.

Perry Farrell talked about filmmaking. The band's followers felt cheated. The greatest art-rock band since the 1970s called it quits after just three records. A fourth, regardless of its content, would have been huge.

But Perkins says that that was a part of the problem. The band could do no wrong in the eyes of its fans, though the players themselves hadn't felt collectively *right* in quite some time. Simply, as a unit, Jane's Addiction became incapable of fulfilling its own creative impulses. To Perkins, it was like swimming for the surface with an anchor on your ankle. Despite—and maybe *because* of—their best intentions, there was no fourth album in them to make.

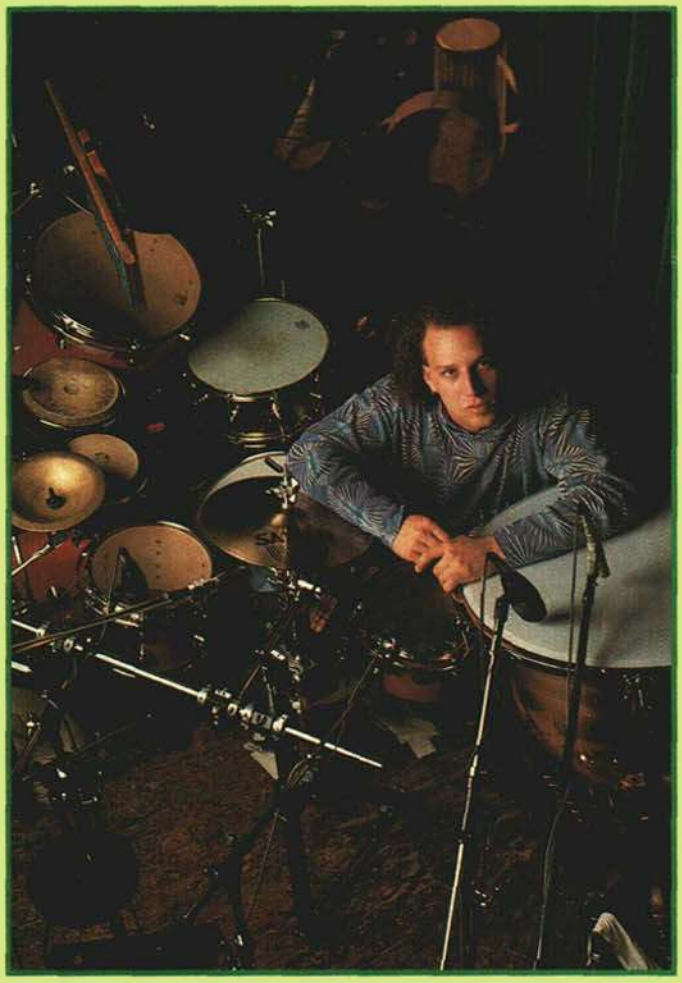
Perkins resurfaced this past year on the funk-rock offering from the band Infectious Grooves, a spinoff of Suicidal Tendencies. But Perkins still had a grasp of the bigger picture; it just took him a while to get it in focus.

"Perry went to one of the Infectious Grooves shows," Perkins recalls. "I saw him out in the crowd, and he looked at me, and it was like this unspoken thing, like, 'Hey, *we* should be up here playing together.' The Infectious thing was cool, but I knew where my heart really was, and that was with Perry, making great music."

Porno For Pyros, the Farrell/Perkins reunion venture, didn't happen overnight. Finding the right guitarist and bassist was painstaking. Once it happened, songs flowed easily. Some are so *Jane'sy* that it's hard to tell the difference. (A couple actually *were* born during Jane's Addiction rehearsals.) Others reach musical territory Jane's either wouldn't or couldn't attempt. Farrell's lyrical slant and dissonant voice are immediately identifiable. So is Perkins' playing. When you hear his drumming with Porno, it's easy to understand the intangible magic behind Jane's' success.

At just 25, Stephen Perkins already has his own sound. His snare carries a signature crack. He's pure bombast at one turn, passive the next, but always in touch with the emotional side of music. And nobody simply enjoys drumming more than he does. Myriad percussion instruments line his Reseda, California home—a talking drum, a steel drum, congas, a tabla, and other drums of unknown name and origin. He watches TV from behind a practice kit. A Buddy Rich/Max Roach drum battle gets as much stereo time as old KISS records do. Drumming friends around town or on tour make it a point to stop by and jam.

But Perkins, who seemingly *always* wears a smile, is directing all his attention these days to Porno For Pyros. Like Jane's Addiction, his new band goes against the grain, even of what's considered "cutting edge" or alternative rock. His kit is streamlined, but carries more oddities than before—bongos, timbales, a timpani. Behind it all, though, is the same Stephen Perkins, happy simply to be playing no-boundaries music.



Platters For Perkins

According to Stephen, these recordings best represent his drumming...

Artist	Album Title
Jane's Addiction	Ritual De Lo Habitual
Jane's Addiction	Nothing's Shocking
Jane's Addiction	Jane's Addiction
Infectious Grooves	Booty Move*
Porno For Pyros	Porno For Pyros

...and these were the most influential on his playing.

Artist	Album Title	Drummer
Benny Goodman	Live At Carnegie Hall	Gene Krupa
Buddy Rich And Max Roach	Rich Vs. Roach	Buddy Rich and Max Roach
The Who	Live At Leeds	Keith Moon
Led Zeppelin	The Song Remains The Same	John Bonham
The Beatles	Abbey Road	Ringo Starr
Bad Brains	Attitude	Earl Hudson
Grateful Dead	Europe 72	Billy Kreutzman and Mickey Hart
Peter Gabriel	Passion	various

** Steve plays on three songs: "Punk It Up," "Infectious Grooves," and "Back To The People."*

MP: It's good to see you back in a band like this. It seemed like Jane's Addiction was the perfect outlet for you, but it kind of died of unnatural causes.

SP: There were a number of reasons why we put an end to Jane's Addiction, and Perry is the one who first brought it up. It's kind of like having a relationship with your girlfriend that's gone bad: You're not getting along, you still love each other, and someone's got to say it's time to take a break. With Jane's, it was like, "Well, we've done everything we can with each other. Let's find some other people."

MP: Did you really think you'd done everything that could be done with Jane's? I think a lot of people felt you were just hitting a stride with the last record *[Ritual De Lo Habitual],* artistically and commercially.

SP: Musically we weren't finished, but personality-wise we were. We couldn't go past a certain point because we had personal problems. Sometimes those can be worked out, but there was this negative seed, where we couldn't make positive music anymore. With Porno, everybody is so positive and likes each other. It's very refreshing. Another problem with Jane's was that we had to keep playing the same songs over and over because that's what people wanted to hear. We never got to write new songs.

MP: But isn't that going to be just a natural part of life with any touring band?

SP: Yeah, but it's like painting the same thing over and over. You paint it once and you can let people enjoy it, but then you should paint something else. We did our paint job on the record, and we loved playing it live. But we wanted to move on, and we got locked into something we didn't want to get locked into—it just felt spent. Jane's kind of went full circle, to where if we went back into the studio, we would have *tried* to make a Jane's record—like, "What would Jane's Addiction write?"—as opposed to what's really coming out of us. With this band, we want to make this record, put it aside, and make another record; just keep going like that. We've got a studio at my house now, so we can rehearse and write songs any time we want to and just push the record button any time anything new comes up. We don't want to depend on any set of songs to get us through our career. We want to create songs and move on.

MP: Are you surprised that you wound

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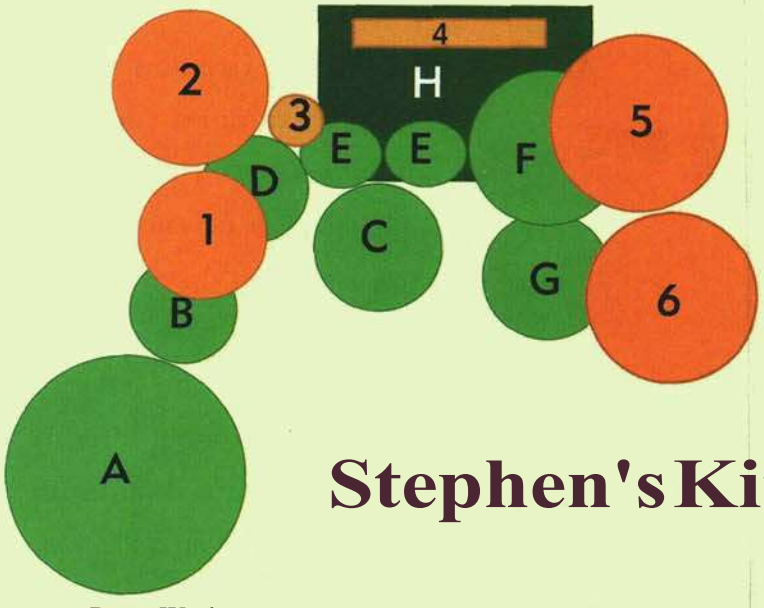
Stephen's Kit



Drumset: Drum Workshop in custom Perkins "flame" finish
A. 26" timpani
B. 10" brass timbale
C. 5 x 13 wood snare
D. 9 x 10 tom
E. Latin Percussion bongos
F. 14 x 16 tom
G. 13" brass timbale
H. 16 x 20 bass drum

Cymbals: Sabian
1.13" light hi-hats
2.16" thin crash
3. Latin Percussion *Ice Bell*
4. Latin Percussion wind chimes
5. 20" medium ride
6.18" medium Chinese

Hardware: All DW, including a Collarlock rack system

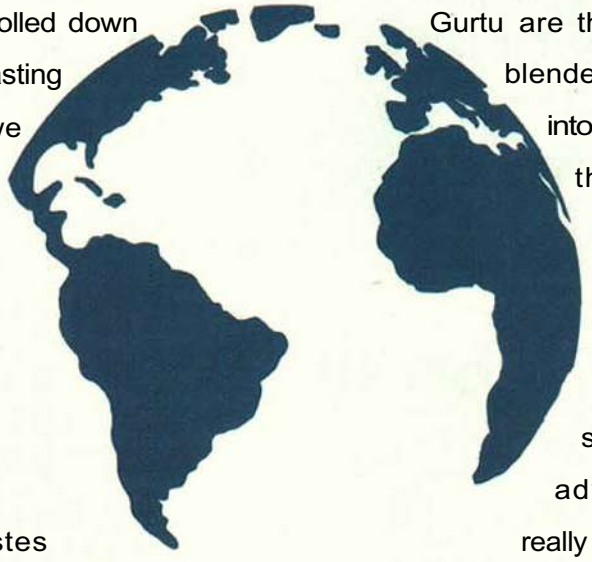
Heads: Remo coated *Ambassador* on top of snare, clear *Ambassadors* on tops and bottoms of toms and front and back of bass drum, with absolutely no muffling on any drums, including the bass drum

Sticks: Pro-Mark *808* oak, *Jazz* oak, and *Hot-Rods* models

ETHNIC DRUMMERS

Finding Inspiration Around The World

For those of us raised on rock 'n' roll, the prospect of listening to Tibetan gamelan or German polkas in the school library probably didn't have *quite* the same appeal as driving down Main Street with the windows rolled down and "Stairway To Heaven" blasting out of the speakers. And we probably didn't have many neighborhood buddies organizing African drumming ensembles either. Besides, banging out AC/DC and Zeppelin covers in Billy's garage was plenty fun.



Eventually, though, our tastes broaden. Former Camper Van Beethoven and current Monks of Doom drummer Chris Pedersen puts it this way: "After a while you get tired of hearing and playing the same thing over and over again. So you want to play a rock song with some other flavor, and you take that from something you've heard—like maybe a salsa rhythm, or Celtic music."

Manu Katche, Stewart Copeland, and Trilok Gurtu are three drummers who have blended strong ethnic elements into their playing. By doing so, they've created their own unique place on the music scene, and have become very sought-after for their individual talents and styles. Even with their great advances, though, they've really only scratched the surface. Once we start looking closely, we realize that ethnic music from all over the globe is a bottomless well, with an infinite number of ideas for the rest of us drummers to explore. We too can infuse our playing with as fresh and inter-

By Adam Budofsky

3-D illustration by Dan Yaccarino, photo by Charlie Welch

esting ideas as these drumming giants have, simply by walking through a few unopened doors.

In recent years, several bands have surfaced who incorporate ethnic styles on a serious and highly creative level. To cover the musical territory—much of it uncharted—the drummers in these bands have had to be equally creative and exploratory, and have truly stretched the bounds of what our instrument is capable of. We decided to speak to some of these drummers, and compare each of their methods, requirements, and philosophies. In addition to Chris Pederson, we picked the brains of David Licht, drummer with contemporary klezmer band the Klezmatjcs; Mitch Marine and Phil Hernandez, former and current drummers, respectively, with polka/Latin world beat masters Brave Combo; the members of D'Cuckoo, a quartet who weave African music and other styles into their highly electronic sound; and Lee Partis, drummer with the Oyster Band, who, employ British and Celtic jigs, reels, and polkas in their unique music.

Chris Pederson

David Licht

Mitch Marine

Catching The Bug

For the most part, the drummers we spoke to went through similar musical journeys to the one Chris Pedersen described earlier, with their playing styles often growing out of their listening tastes. "I was interested in listening to things that were off the beaten track," Chris recalls. "I would buy records from the dollar bins—things like Gentle Giant and Focus and stuff that I had never even heard of. And I ended up liking a lot of it and playing drums to it. It was more challenging to me."

"I was basically brought up on KISS and Aerosmith—just rock 'n' roll kind of stuff," recalls Mitch Marine. "In junior college I began to listen to jazz, and we had an African ensemble there. I remember listening to David Lindley's *El Rayo-X* record when I first came to North Texas; State. Some guys there were getting me into that and ska bands like the Specials, the Selector—things like that."

"Klezmer was something I wanted to explore as my musical roots," says David Licht, whose band, the Klezmatics, updates the traditional Jewish music of its members' ancestors. "Kramer [Licht's bandmate in various groups] had given me this record of klezmer music on the Folkways label, which contained music from all these old 78s, and I just couldn't get enough of it. The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York has just thousands of recordings, and even now, they sound different to me every time I hear them."

At a young age, Phil Hernandez played drums for his dad's band at "Filipino Association types of gigs," but his ethnic ears were really opened, he says, from another band he was in: "Goodfoot was more of a funk band, and that's when I started getting into juju and a little Latin stuff. I began to hear how the bell patterns in go-go music are parallel to juju music and African-based rhythms."

Connections

In describing his early ear-opening experience- Phil Hernandez hits on an important point that many of our drummers brought up. By seeing the connections between certain ethnic musics and the music they were already familiar with, getting into the new styles was less of a shock to their systems, so to speak. Mitch Marine believes that making such connections can erase the "hipness" stigmas that have become inherent in certain styles. "If you

can open yourself up to something like polkas," Marine suggests, "and understand that polka is a groove that is to be reckoned with and to understand and appreciate and enjoy, that makes it easier to listen to other things. When I played in a wedding band in high school, we'd do 'Roll Out The Barrel,' and all the musicians would kind of roll their eyes. But when I joined Brave Combo, I started listening to more things and opening up more."

"It's an obvious statement to say that all music is connected," Lee Partis says, "but you start to realize that it's connected in very subtle ways—developmental ways. Music came from Africa, went to the Caribbean, and then to North America, and became the blues. Blues became rock and country, and then country went back to Africa, to the point where Jimmy Reed has become almost deified there.

"A couple of years ago," Partis adds, "I got a bodhran [a frame drum used in Celtic music], and when I first started playing, I just naturally heard African rhythms. In fact, Irish music is connected to Arabic and Spanish music. Spain is probably our best territory as far as touring goes, as a matter of fact. There's a big connection, especially in the north of Spain. It's all incredibly complex. I think that's why 'world music' is such an obvious thing."

David Licht sees the evolution of klezmer music as proof of how different types of musics can intertwine. "The origins of klezmer go back to ancient times, and a lot of the music is based on cantorial "music, which goes back to the synagogue. Today's influence is mostly from Eastern Europe—Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland. As the Jews were kicked out of country after country, the music was influenced by those different cultures. And with the immigration of Jews to America, things like Sousa marches and, much later, jazz became part of the influence. Then the Sephardic Jews from Spain have their own approach to the music."

When it is suggested to David that Celtic music and klezmer seem to share certain characteristics, David agrees. "I'm sure the weddings would be similar affairs. Actually, Andy Statman, who is a world-class bluegrass mandolin player but who also plays a lot of klezmer, did a show with [Irish band] DeDannan at the Bottom Line in New York, and people said they heard similarities. I heard his klezmer trio, and it's some of the hippest stuff around."

Phil Hernandez

D'Cuckoo

Lee Partis

The Real McCoy?

Once you develop an interest in ethnic styles, just how do you integrate it into your music? When we asked our drummers how they approach ethnic styles, we found that there are as many specific modes of operation as there are players. We'll talk specifically in a bit how some of them approach the drumset, but it's important to note here that their responses did seem to fall into two main categories: trying to mainly recreate *a feel* or sound without worrying too much about playing authentic parts; and really getting down and learning how a style *is* authentically played and then applying it. Each tactic comes with its own set of assumptions and consequences.

Brave Combo have been exhibiting their \ command of many different ethnic styles for over a decade. One look at their song list tells the story: There are literally hundreds of songs listed under headings like Mambo, Japanese Okinawan, Polkas, and French, not to mention styles like C&W, Originals, and Lounge/Muzak/Swing. To be able to play such an enormous range of styles on demand—at venues as diverse as Jewish or Polish weddings and alternative rock clubs—the Combo players obviously have to have a good handle on the traditional styles and methods of playing them. "Playing in Combo is weird," confesses Phil Hernandez, "because the concept is traditional, but we're Americans playing these styles of music. So part of that authenticity is mixed with our own style."

"Before I joined Brave Combo," Mitch Marine recalls, "I saw that on the records they would have the name of the song, and right next to it, the style that it was. That's when I realized that I really had to study, because I didn't want to be completely wrong—with the style written down *right there.* Later, if we were playing for a specific audience that understood the style we were going for, it made me feel great when I saw those people dancing the way they were accustomed to dancing."

Camper Van Beethoven took a less formal approach in applying Greek, ska, Spanish, and other ethnic styles to their songs. "We would

continued on page 101

Meinl Raker Cymbals

by Brian Alpert

Like a high-wattage rock radio station, Rakers come through loud and clear!

Meinl's *Raker* line are "cymbals with a mission." They are to cymbals what the icebreaker is to the seafaring world: the tool you need when you have to *cut through* at any cost. The good news is that these are good-sounding cymbals that *will* cut through the dense wall of sound generated by so many of today's incredibly loud bands. The "other" news (I hesitate to call it "bad") is that there is a cost. The *Rakers* are a combination of pluses and minuses.

These pluses and minuses are consistent from cymbal to cymbal. It is evident in all of the *Rakers* I received (14" heavy *Sound Wave* hi-hats, a 16" heavy crash, and a 20" heavy ride) that clarity of sound was the intent—the better to "cut" with. The hi-hat cymbals (when played individually), the crash, and the ride sounded truly matched. What that means is that the *Rakers* are true to their "mission," and perform it well: They are all loud, bright, cutting cymbals. But it also means that they have certain limitations. They are single-purpose instruments, and lack the versatility of some other cymbal lines. In fact, they are the most one-dimensional cymbals I have ever heard. But I hasten to add that while this is not wonderful, it is not necessarily a curse, either.

Let's look at the cymbals individually, starting with the hi-hats. Both the top and bottom cymbals were quite heavy, and the bottom cymbal was configured with slight, but noticeable ridges (the "sound waves" that give the model its name) completely ringing its outer edge. These are intended to prevent airlock, and the design is successful: I experienced a negligible amount of airlock, and the cymbals produced a loud, clear "chick" sound. The ridged bottom also enabled me to get a particularly clean "sizzle" effect, which I like to do a lot. Though this isn't the kind of playing one normally associates with loudest-of-the-loud rock bands, that needn't prevent one from using these cymbals in ways not necessarily tied to their main mission. And the way these hi-hats *sounded* went well with the "sizzle."

I should point out that if you're the type who likes to experiment with switching top and bottom hi-hat cymbals, this isn't going to be as feasible with a ridged bottom cymbal. It's certainly *possible* to play the bottom cymbal on top, but doing so felt strange to me. I also didn't notice any particular acoustic advantage, as is sometimes the case with standard cymbals.

In the case of the hi-hats, their lack of versatility didn't bother me. I wouldn't use them on a jazz gig, but, in truth, I liked the way they sounded, and on most medium-loud to *really* loud gigs, the individual nature of the hi-hats are frequently sacrificed anyway.

I was somewhat less content with the 16" heavy crash. It had a nice, crystal-clear crash—but *only* that one sound, loud or soft, take it or leave it. Even the other musicians in my band commented on the cymbal's one-dimensional nature. As a result, I would think twice before filling up my entire arsenal of crashes with *Rakers.* On the other hand, if you have the space for several different crashes on your kit, and you need one or two that will get through the guitars and P.A. at *any* level, the *Rakers* would be a good choice.

Like the crash, the 20" heavy ride had one sound—I *tried* to get more than one

out of it; I really did. I even slammed it with the butt end of my stick. But I continued to get the same clear, piercing tone. Now, to give it its due, this is a *killingly* loud ride cymbal. It has the loudest bell I have ever heard—and a good-sounding one, at that. And although I would not choose this cymbal as an all-purpose ride, if I were playing music in the 120-plus dB range on a regular basis, I would be glad to have the *Raker* ride on my side. It's a question of priorities—of choosing an instrument to suit one's specific needs.

Meinl's *Raker* heavy cymbals are an example of good products developed for a specific need. As long as you know what they are about, and are prepared to sacrifice a certain measure of artistic expression in order to prevent the loss of your sanity (always a possibility when struggling to be heard in extremely loud situations), the heavy *Rakers* offer a possible solution—a helping hand to break through the ice of the modern, ultra-loud environment.

In fairness, I should add that the complete *Raker* line includes a variety of sizes and models, including effects cymbals and some medium-weight crashes and rides. It's possible that those models might offer a bit more tonal variety than the heavy cymbals I examined. But I tend to think that Meinl's overall design approach for this line would still keep the cymbals in the "loud and clear" department. The cymbals I tested are priced at $293 for the hi-hats, $162 for the crash, and $255 for the ride. They're also available as a set for $519.

Meinl cymbals are made in Germany, but the company has recently concluded a U.S. distribution deal for the *Raker* line with Gibson USA. So if you can't find *Rakers* in your favorite drumshop, ask the dealer to contact Gibson USA, 1818 Elm Hill Park, Nashville, TN 37210, (615) 871-4500 for further information.

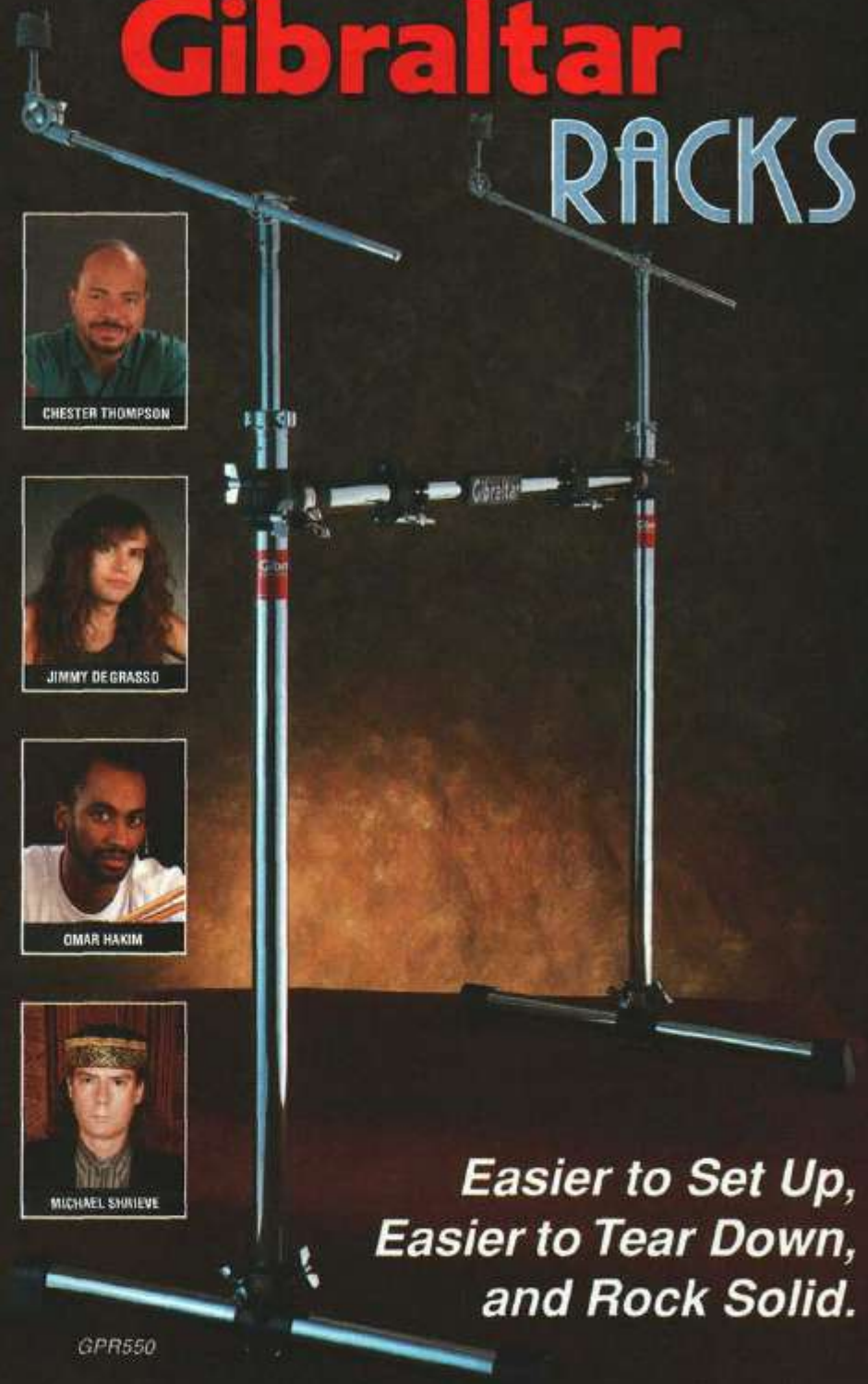
Gibraltar RACKS

CHESTER THOMPSON

JIMMY DEGRASSO

OMAR HAKIM

MICHAEL SHRIEVE


GPR550

Easier to Set Up, Easier to Tear Down, and Rock Solid.

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Customize your setup with Gibraltar Racks. The number one name in rack systems. Innovative. User friendly. Road proven. Built for professional drummers yet surprisingly affordable. Gibraltar Racks. Rock solid.

Gibraltar HARDWARE

Kaman Music Corp. P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002 KAMAN

Electronic Percussion Systems Visu-Lite Electronic Cymbals

by Rich Watson

Some of the most exciting ideas in electronic percussion are born when the demand for the familiar meets the allure of new possibilities. For example, most drummers want electronics to feel as much like "real" drums as possible, and manufacturers are constantly discovering new ways to accommodate them. But because acoustic principles don't dictate electronic trigger design, what electronics *look* like is limited only by their inventors' imaginations. Electronic Percussion Systems responds dramatically to the old-new challenge with its *Visu-Lite* line of acrylic cymbal triggers.

General

Visu-Lites come in four basic models: standard crash/ride; bell trigger; "dampening," which can be choked much like an acoustic cymbal; and hi-hats. Basic models, all 1/4" thick, are available in 10", 12", 14", 16", and 18" diameters. Except for the size of their "bells" (between those of mini-cups and flat rides), *Visu-Lites* are shaped exactly like brass cymbals. Their *Stick Saver* edges are rounded to minimize wear and tear on your good ol' 5Bs.

A piezo trigger housed inside a spring-lock connector similar to those found on home stereo speakers is pop-riveted to the underside of each cymbal. Terminals on these connectors clamp onto bare-wire ends of the included cables, which have standard 1/4" plugs on the other end. A stronger or weaker signal results depending on how the leads are matched to color-coded terminals. (The instructions correctly point out that MIDI controllers vary; my experimentation actually produced results opposite to those indicated in the documentation.) At first sight, the spring-lock connectors seem a bit primitive, but the folks at EPS chose them specifically for their low mass (so as not to hinder transmission of the shock wave over the cymbal's entire surface) and for their durability.

An optional wedge of black gum rubber called a "dampening pad" can be draped from the cymbal stand post over the cymbal to provide a quieter playing surface for practice, the studio, or performance situations where the noise of sticks on plastic might be a nuisance.

Velcro cable locks keep the cables tidy while in storage and, more importantly, secure them to cymbal stands—helping to isolate their wire leads and the trigger housing/connectors from shock (like when your guitar player trips over the cable).

Feel

The *Visu-Lites'* playing surface is hard, reminiscent of the first generation of Simmons pads. But whereas the old Simmons' hardness was a poor simulation of acoustic drumheads, the feel of the *Visu-Lites* more closely approximates real metal cymbals than any rubber pad. Depending on your band's typical stage volume, the drawback of this natural feel may be the clacking noise produced by playing on such a hard surface. Drummers who play in loud situations might actually consider this an advantage, providing themselves and other band members with an audible time reference when stage monitors don't always suffice. Not belonging to that category, I found the clatter to be a bit annoying and therefore preferred playing on the rubber dampening pad.

The *Visu-Lites'* kinetic response provides another nod to tactile authenticity. Unlike other pads that mock us with rigidity no matter how brutally we think we're beating them, *Visu-Lites* move proportionally to the force of the impact—just like real cymbals do. This is especially gratifying with the crashes.

Sensitivity

Visu-Lites excel in the area of sensitivity. Regardless of size, each ride picked up my softest strokes even at a low gain setting—this is one *hot* trigger—and responded uniformly across the entire playing surface. With the controller properly programmed, even buzz rolls tracked flawlessly. Despite this sensitivity, they proved amazingly resistant to false and double triggering. Even piggy-backing two cymbals on one stand yielded no interactive triggering. Use of Aquarian *Cymbal Spring* mounts had no effect on their response, nor did their angle or the degree to which they were tightened between felt washers. The slight reduction of sensitivity caused by playing on the dampening pad was easily offset by raising the gain on the MIDI controller.

Visu-Lites exhibit an interesting response characteristic that should be considered when selecting size. Although the dynamic range of the smaller-diameter cymbals is comparable to the best triggers I've played, it gets even better with the larger ones—and is truly amazing on the 18". In this way, just as a 14" acoustic cymbal "peaks" with less exertion than an 18", *Visu-Lites* behave just like real cymbals.

Appearance

Visu-Lites offer looks that will appeal to almost anyone. Fifteen available colors include seven classy, smooth opaques,

seven glassy, modern translucents, and four outrageous flourescent-translucents, whose edges look like neon tubing! These colors and the real-cymbal movement will return some of the flash lost in the too-often unyielding, black rubber world of electronic percussion.

"Dampening" Model

The "dampening" *1050* series features a double-contact sensor strip on the cymbal's underside, an extra ground lead on the cable, and a corresponding terminal on the spring-lock connector. Positioned 1" in from the edge around half the cymbal's circumference, the sensor sends a signal to another input on the MIDI controller when grabbed—making an electronic connection between the sensor's two contacts. The actual "choke" is not a function of the *Visu-Lite,* but of popular MIDI interfaces such as the *drumKAT* and the Alesis *D-4,* which permit a sound to be interrupted by subsequent sounds in the same exclusive output groups. What's special about the *Visu-Lite* is its real-drummer method of activating the second signal.

Because the sensor strip is only touched instead of struck, the choke trigger's gain must be raised nearly to maximum to activate consistently. At lower levels the strip sometimes fails to respond to a normal grab. Unfortunately, this higher gain also resulted in some serious multiple triggering. This is problematic only when another sound is assigned to the choke trigger, such as pedal or closed hi-hat, to provide additional "bite" to the truncated crash (as EPS president Tom Pickard suggested). Raising the sensor's threshold or lowering its gain eliminated the doubling, but again rendered the choking action unreliable. Despite a lot of juggling on the *drumKAT,* either choke reliability or a clean, single trigger was compromised. Ironically, I found the simple, dependable note-off "rest" in my *R-8M* to sound just as realistic as the peskier combinations anyway (and, of course, double-triggering *silence* is not a problem).

Bell-Trigger Model

A new model from EPS that reached us too late to be included in the photo for this review is the *1000-B* Bell-Trigger ride cymbal. Available only in an 18" size, the *1000-B* is identical to the standard model except for its 6 1/2" shiny black dome, which houses a second trigger. The cymbal and bell are separated by foam rubber. Like the dampening model, its cable possesses an extra lead and its connector has an extra pair of terminals.

For typical cymbal/bell sound combinations, some interaction is acceptable—even desirable—but I was curious to see if the bell and main triggers could respond discretely (a tricky feat for two piezos even in indirect physical contact).

I assigned a ride cymbal sound to the main cymbal surface and a dry cowbell sound to the bell. With the two triggers at identical settings, playing the bell also triggered the cymbal sound. But by reducing the gain and raising the threshold of the main cymbal trigger to levels that just barely picked up my softest strokes, I could play the bell with moderately high intensity with absolutely no interaction.

Hi-Hat Model

The *Visu-Lites'* hi-hat system is the only trigger I know of that works with any conventional hi-hat stand. The feel, then,

is not only authentic, it's personalized.

The top cymbal features a momentary microswitch that protrudes downward from the trigger housing/connector. The cable is drawn to the connector up through a small hole a couple of inches from the center of the bottom cymbal. When the cymbals make contact, the switch is engaged, sending a signal to an input in the MIDI controller and routing all notes played on the top cymbal to the same input. This trigger would commonly be programmed to access a closed hi-hat sound in the synth or sampler. When the cymbals are opened, the switch is disengaged and all notes played on the cymbal are directed to another input, programmed to access an open hi-hat sound. With the sounds occupying the same exclusive group in the interface, each activation of the closed sound cuts off any ringing of the open sound. If the hi-hat is not stomped solidly enough to close the switch, the cymbals striking each other will trigger the open sound, effectively creating a heel splash. Done intentionally, this is a wonderful feature not present in simple footswitch hi-hats—but it does demand a clean, deliberate foot technique.

For some, what this design gains in a natural feel will be lost in other considerations. First, it produces only two hi-hat sounds: open and closed. The only way to create a distinct pedal hi-hat sound is through finagling with the controller or sound source. By assigning both pedal and closed hi-hat sounds to a velocity-switched sound and setting the switch point to just above the microswitch's trigger level, a stomp will produce a pedal hi-hat sound and harder hand strokes will produce a closed hi-hat sound. Unfortunately, hand strokes whose velocity is not above the programmed threshold will also trigger the pedal sound. Depending on what styles of music you play, the lack of a distinct pedal hi-hat sound may not be important.

Another possible weakness of the *Visu-Lite* hi-hats is their use of an extra input in the MIDI controller. The simplest of three hi-hat functions on the *drumKAT,* for instance, permits two closed, one open, and one pedal sound while occupying an additional footswitch input—but only one trigger input.

Finally, drummers who don't normally play in high stage-volume situations may not care for the volume or quality of the sound produced by the two cymbals closing, which I found to be even more obtrusive than the stick-on-plastic sound. Experiments with the dampening pads solved the problem and made me wonder why EPS hadn't muted the contact edge of either the top or bottom cymbal with an inch-wide ring of the same black rubber.

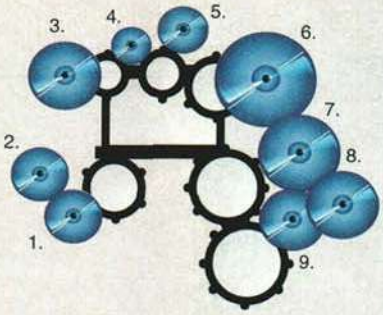
Durability

The inevitable association of anything transparent (as were all the *Visu-Lites* I tested) with glass made me a bit uncomfortable about beating on them. But at Tom Pickard's urging I overcame this and banged away much harder than I normally play. There were no casualties. The solidity of the trigger/connector and quality of the finish work on the edges and where holes are drilled suggest top-drawer workmanship. If, through many setups and teardowns, the cable ends break, re-stripping them is a snap. Also, they can be replaced by any cable with bare leads on one end. All *Visu-Lites* come with a standard 90-day warranty.

Conclusions

Visu-Lites look and feel fantastic! The appeal of the *Visu-Lite* hi-hats may depend on whether your priority is feel or function. Honorable mention goes to the "dampening" cymbal for its novel approach, and highest honors go to the standard crash/ride and bell-trigger models for their exceptional sensitivity and dynamic range.

Standard single-trigger crash/rides list for $116 to $175, depending on size; the bell-trigger model is $195; "dampening" models range from $192 to $225; hi-hats are $199 a pair. Custom colors, shapes, and sizes are available by special order. For more information contact Electronic Percussion Systems at P.O. Box 7481, St. Cloud, MN 56302.



KURT WORTMAN

"I've used Paiste Cymbals for 15 years and I plan to continue using them for the next 75 years. Their committment to innovation in the world of metallic sound is inspiring."

Favorite recordings Kurt has played on:

"With Every Wish"
Bruce Springsteen / "Human Touch"
"The Beast"
Motion Picture Soundtrack: Mark Isham
"Little Man Tate"
Motion Picture Soundtrack: Mark Isham

Cymbal Set-Up:

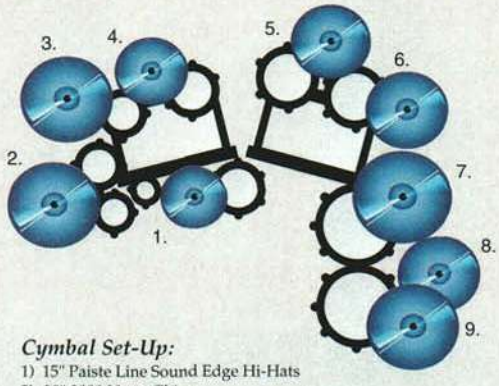
1) 14" Sound Creation Dark Medium Sound Edge Hi-Hats
2) 14" Paiste Line Thin China
3) 18" Paiste Line Heavy China
4) 8" Paiste Line Splash
5) 10" Paiste Line Splash
6) 18" Paiste Line Thin China
7) 19" Paiste Line Dry Ride
8) 18" Sound Creation New Dimension Dark Crash
9) 18" 602 Medium Flatride

DAVE LOMBARDO

"There's a certain sound quality only Paiste has. The strike of a 'Signature' crash, crisp and clear, is able to be heard over the loudest guitar leads. Paiste rides, to me, are the backbone of cymbals, the ones with the most character. They almost make you feel like the song becomes airborne."

Favorite recordings Dave has played on:

"Reign In Blood"
Slayer
"South Of Heaven"
Slayer
"Seasons In The Abyss"
Slayer



Cymbal Set-Up:

1) 15" Paiste Line Sound Edge Hi-Hats
2) 20" 3000 Novo China
3) 20" Paiste Line Power Crash
4) 16" Paiste Line Power Crash
5) 17" Paiste Line Power Crash
6) 18" Paiste Line Power Crash
7) 22" Paiste Line Dry Heavy Ride
8) 18" 3000 Reflector China
9) 20" 3000 Novo China

photo: Jack White

Kurt, Dave, Chris, Ralph — *Los Angeles*

Artist Series

RALPH JOHNSON

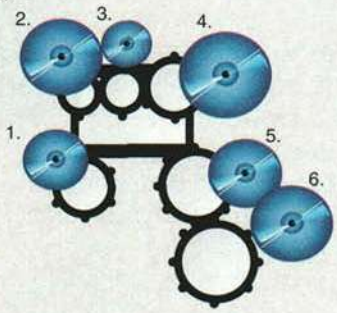
"It was my very good friend Ndugu Chancler who introduced me to Paiste Cymbals back in 1975. Today, when my students and my peers tell me how great my cymbals sound, it only reinforces what I've known all along - they're not just cymbals, they're tonal works of art!"

Favorite recordings Ralph has played on:

"Open Our Eyes"
Earth Wind & Fire
"Gratitude"
Earth Wind & Fire
"All and All"
Earth Wind & Fire

Cymbal Set-Up:

1) 13" Paiste Line Dark Crisp Hi-Hat
2) 18" Sound Formula Thin Crash
3) 10" Paiste Line Splash
4) 20" Paiste Line Dry Ride
5) 15" Sound Formula Thin Crash
6) 18" 3000 Rude China

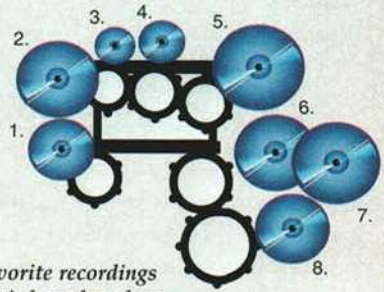


CHRIS ROSS

"I believe Paiste Cymbals are a true extension of myself - versatile, powerful and adaptable to any musical situation."

Cymbal Set-Up:

1) 13" Paiste Line Heavy Hi-Hat Bottom for Top & 13" Dark Crisp Hi-Hat Bottom for Bottom
2) 16" 3000 Power Crash
3) 8" Paiste Line Splash
4) 10" 3000 Rude Splash
5) 22" Paiste Line Dry Heavy Ride
6) 17" Paiste Line Power Crash
7) 16" 3000 China
8) 14" Paiste Line Heavy Hi-Hat Top & 14" Dark Crisp Hi-Hat Bottom



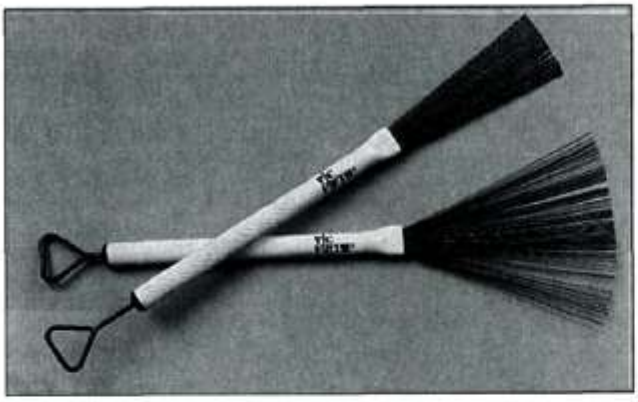
Favorite recordings Chris has played on:

"Triacity"
BSB
"Dance Of Love"
Dan Hill
"Iza"
Izabella

PAiSTE
CYMBALS SOUNDS GONGS

For free Paiste literature, please write Paiste America, 460 Atlas Street, Brea, CA 92621
"Paiste Line" also known as "Signature Series"

Vic Firth Jazz Brushes



Vic Firth's new *Jazz Brush* features a molded plug, which allows for an infinitely adjustable brush spread. The plug also keeps the spread intact until physically moved by the player. In addition, the brushes feature heavy-gauge wire, a 5" spread, an oversized triangular metal pull rod, and a textured, high-impact handle. **Vic Firth, Inc., 323 Whiting Ave., Unit B, Dedham, MA (617) 326-3455.**

Etymotic Research Canal Phone

Etymotic Research's *ER-4 Canal Phones* are lightweight, in-the-ear phones that the makers claim reproduce the average diffuse-field response of the ear at the eardrum and provide 20-25dB of external noise exclusion. Etymotic believes that the *ER-4's* eardrum-response calibration make its frequency response uniquely accurate. Its low-frequency response is said to remain virtually flat down to 20Hz. *Canal Phones* fit into the ear canals, sealing them with soft-flange ear tips or optional custom-fitted ear molds. The makers say that the resulting noise exclusion allows listeners to hear full dynamic range at lower volumes. It also allows for optimal live monitoring by performers or sound engineers in high-noise environments. **Etymotic Research, 61 Martin Lane, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007, tel: (708) 228-0006, fax: (708) 228-6836.**

New From LP

LP's new *Easy Access Rack* is specifically designed for disabled drummers and percussionists. The rack is easily adjustable and can mount all types of instruments.

LP's *SoftShake* is a pair of lightweight shakers that is joined by elastic bands and features a delicate shake sound. The *SoftShake's* two shakers can be used individually for an even softer sound.

LP's new *Black Beauty Sr.* cowbell has a dry, lingering tone and is lower in pitch than the original *Black Beauty,* and the company's new talking drums feature wood shells and a non-chafing rim that employs roller bearing surfaces to provide a squeak-free sound. **Latin Percussion, Inc., 160 Belmont Ave., Garfield, NJ 07026.**

Boom Theory Stash Floor Tom

Boom Theory's new 15x15 *Stash Floor Tom* is designed to hold two standard *Spacemuffins* rack toms internally for easy transport and storage. Boom Theory has also introduced its new *World Stage Series Spacemuffins* kit, which features full acoustic-sized drums able to withstand the dB levels encountered in live performance. A 12x22 bass drum is also now available. **Boom Theory Corp., 16149 Redmond Way, #303, Redmond, WA 98052, tel: (206) 861-7396, fax: (206) 881-9609.**

New Gibraltar Rack Systems

Gibraltar's new *GPR-550 Deluxe Rack* with cymbal boom arms was designed to replace their *GPR-500* rack, and their new *GPR-150* basic side extension replaces the *GPR-100* extension. Both of the new systems feature Gibraltar's T-leg, previously available only on the company's higher-priced *Road Series* racks. In addition, the *GPR-550* features a new vertical bar and cymbal boom arm combination, which allows more room on the horizontal bars for other objects to be attached. **Gibraltar c/o Kaman Music Corp., P.O. Box 507, Bloomfield, CT 06002.**

Pro-Mark Deluxe Cymbal Bag And Little Giant Slicks

Pro-Mark's new *CC-10 Deluxe Cymbal Bag* is made of tough *Cordura-like* material, holds cymbals up to 22" in diameter, and features a rugged plastic inside liner that discourages cymbals from cutting through the bottom. It also has two outside pockets, one that holds hi-hats up to 15" in diameter and the other for miscellaneous hardware. The bag also features heavy-duty handles and a padded shoulder strap. In addition, Pro-Mark's *new Little Giant* drumsticks are a 15"x 1 1/2" version of their *Giant* novelty drumsticks, though the company claims these sticks are actually playable. **Pro-Mark Corp., 10707 Craighead, Houston, TX 77025-5899, tel: (713) 666-2525, fax: (713) 669-8000.**

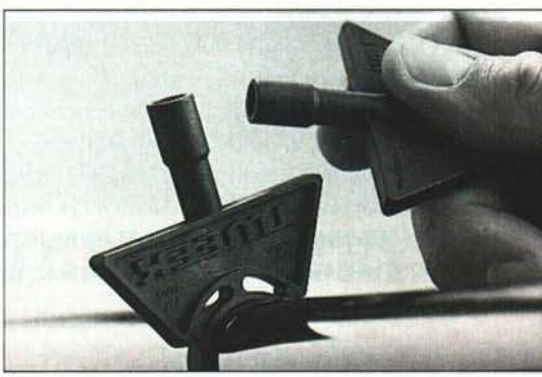
Galaxy Custom Snare Drum

Drum Heaven, a Boston-area seller and restorer of vintage drums, has introduced the *Galaxy,* a hand-crafted, custom snare drum. According to its makers, the drum's design pays homage to the vintage tube-lug snare drums of the '20s and '30s. All of the drum's parts are made in America by noted specialists, including its 15-ply North American birch shells, which are made by Eames Drums' Joe MacSweeney. Bearing edges and snare beds are said to be cut to very tight tolerances, and the shell is sized so that the drumhead can "float" on it, theoretically adding intensity to the drum's sound.

Many finishes are available, including hand-rubbed natural, cherry sunburst, black piano lacquer, white marine pearl, and black oyster pearl. The drum's ten tube lugs, tension rods, and hand-engraved, triple-flanged lugs are made of bare brass. Custom hoop engraving and choice of heads and strainers are available. **Drum Heaven, P.O. Box 1831, Jamaica Plain,** MA **02130, (617) 522-3381.**

Tweek Clip-On Tuning Key

Mechanical Music Corp.'s *Tweek* drum tuning key is made out of a composite material with a certain amount of give to it, allowing the key to be clipped onto heavy drum hardware for easy access. The key's design has recently been patented and has won an award from an industrial design group for its



clever design. Mechanical Music Corp., 3359 N. Ridge Ave., Arlington Heights, IL 60004, tel: (708) 398-5444, fax: (708) 398-5441.

Remo Marching Drums

Triumph marching drums

Remo's new *Bravo* marching drums and small frame carriers feature lightweight lugs and *Acousticon* shells. The series features individual parade, bass, and multi tenor drums. Parade drums are available in 12x14, 10x14, and 10x13 sizes and come with a carrying strap, a multi-angle hook, a leg rest, and a pair of drumsticks, with an optional carrier. Bass drums, which come with a carrying strap and two mallets, plus an optional carrier, come in 12" and 10" "Scotch"-style depths. Multi tenor drums come in three configurations—8", 10", 12" and 10", 12", 13" trio versions, and an 8", 10", 12", 13" quad version—and include a pair of mallets. *Bravo* drums are available in white, chrome, cherry red, and black *Quadura.*

In addition, Remo's *Triumph* marching drums, which are designed for power players requiring maximum strength and sound, now feature *Elite XT* extended "vee" shells. **Remo, Inc., 12804 Raymer St., North Hollywood, CA 91605, (818) 983-2600.**

Moongel Drum Resonance Controller

RTOM Corporation's *Moongel* is designed to stick to drum-heads without adhesives, with the purpose of controlling unwanted overtones. This reusable material can be cleaned with soap and water, and different effects can be obtained by adding or subtracting the amount *of Moongel* used or by moving it to different areas on the head. *Moongel* is being distributed by H.S.S. **RTOM Corp., 30 West Hamilton Ave., Englewood, NJ 07631-2346, tel: (201) 569-3603, fax: (201) 816-9720.**

PureCussion Gigmeister Kit

Last year's introduction of a PureCussion snare drum allowed the company to offer a complete drumset, the *Gigmeister,* which includes a kick drum, a snare, three toms, cymbal arms, a hi-hat stand, and a kick drum pedal. PureCussion says it can customize the kit with various-sized drums, and can fit the kit with triggers and a case. **PureCussion, Inc., 3611 Wooddale Ave. South, Minneapolis,** MN **55416, tel: (612) 927-2330, fax: (612) 927-2333.**

Quiet Drummer Practice Set

According to its makers, the *Quiet Drummer* practice set is a compact, affordable, and lightweight alternative to other practice kits. The kit includes four very quiet gum rubber pads of distinct sound, and is made from wood and finished in black matte. The outfit is adjustable, assembles without tools, folds into a compact travel package, and weighs less than ten pounds. **Quiet Drummer, P.O. Box 49231, Greensboro, NC 27419, (919) 855-8778.**

New Stixonics Stick

Stixonics' new *SX-4X* wood-tip and *SX-4XP* nylon-tip drumsticks measure 17" long x 9/16" in diameter. They are made from straight-grain hickory and are weight-matched to within one gram. **Stixonics, P.O. Box 1437, Wake Forest, NC 27587, tel: (919) 556-1659, fax: (919) 556-4085.**

E-mu Reintroduces SP-1200 Sampling Drum Machine

According to the makers, E-mu has reintroduced its *SP-1200 Sampling Percussion System* due to great demand by musicians. The *SP-1200* is a 12-bit drum machine featuring up to ten seconds of sampling time, a dedicated hardware-based sequencer, touch-sensitive pads, programmable pitch and volume controls, SMPTE read and write capabilities, eight programmable outputs for comprehensive mixing capabilities, and a library of digitally recorded drum and percussion sounds supported by E-mu and third-party sound developers. **E-mu Systems, Inc., 1600 Green Hills Road, P.O. Box 660015, Scotts Valley, CA 95067-0015, tel: (408) 438-1921, fax: (408) 438-8612.**

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In the country, today's hottest drummers speak softly but carry the big stick – Pro-Mark. Pro-Mark drumsticks can really take a beating from these hard hitters. That's because they're hand-finished from premium grade Japanese White Oak, American Hickory and Maple for a great sound, feel and balance. Pro-Mark is number one in the country. But that's no surprise. Because when you're made as well as Pro-Mark, everyone wants to get their hands on you!

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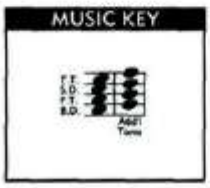
Variations On A Four-Piece Kit

by Jeff Kersh



The four-piece kit is the simplest of all setups, yet it can prove to be one of the most versatile. From jazz ensembles to bar bands, heavy metal outfits to wedding bands, the four-piece is quickly regaining its former popularity. And why not? It's relatively portable and easy to set up, and it provides a much better view of the drummer than the stereotypical wall of drums and cymbals does. In addition, the four-piece is more affordable, and it's easier for less-experienced drummers to handle.

The first mistake a drummer can (and often does) make concerning the four-piece kit is assuming that it's just a "beginner" kit, and that "what you see is what you get" in terms of sound. But just as a pianist can play linear "lead lines" or chords, so can the drummer; when played with thought and imagination, the four-piece kit can be a dramatically versatile instrument.

At first glance, the basic four-piece kit contains four sounds: kick, snare, rack tom, and floor tom. After a period of thought, practice, and experimentation, the resourceful drummer can offer more than the standard "linear" possibilities: kick/snare, kick/rack tom, kick/floor tom, snare/rack tom, snare/floor tom, and rack tom/floor tom combinations. By treating each combination as a separate sound, the kit's possibilities open up—where there were four sounds, there are now *ten* to choose from, and that's without cymbals! With the addition of careful dynamics and "tricks," such as flams between drums, a four-piece kit can easily serve as a substitute for a larger one.

Here is a typical 8th-note intro figure:

It can easily be translated into terms that fit the four-piece format. For instance:

The secret to making a four-piece sound like a larger kit lies in substituting differences in *sound* for the differences in pitch between tom-toms. In a "full bar of 8ths" sort of fill, then, the technique involved remains much the same, while the sounds themselves are quite different. For instance:

Obviously, this fill could be played in numerous combinations, depending on the drummer's preferences. Here's one:

The last two examples are simply extra examples of the effectiveness of adding and subtracting various sound combinations.

The four-piece kit's simplicity is dictated only by the imagination of the drummer who plays it. Artists like Andy Newmark, Stan Lynch, and Kenny Aronoff are prime examples of drummers who effectively use a smaller kit within a rock context, because they play with energy and imagination. On any four-piece kit, using combinations of drum sounds to expand the kit's "range" will leave many listeners wondering where all that sound is coming from.

Calling them PRO means they should be made like professional drums!

Pictured
MP722DP in
Redburst Lacquer

Top of the line professional drums in virtually every brand have maple interiors with exteriors that are lacquered in a choice of spectacular colors. Only the MARS PRO SERIES offers this on their starting professional models.

Drummers today want a full vibrating resonance from their wood shells. That's why you're seeing more zero contact and rim mounted toms. It's also the reason expensive professional drums aren't covered with a glued on plastic wrapping that contradicts the whole idea of maximum projection from a free vibrating shell.

The Mapex Mars Pro is the only starting professional series that has 2 point contact lugs, natural lacquer finish, hardrock maple interiors and exterior mount tom holders. See the exciting model selection that features new deep tom sizes and 18″ deep power bass drums and a color selection that features custom shaded, pearlescent and candy apple finish.

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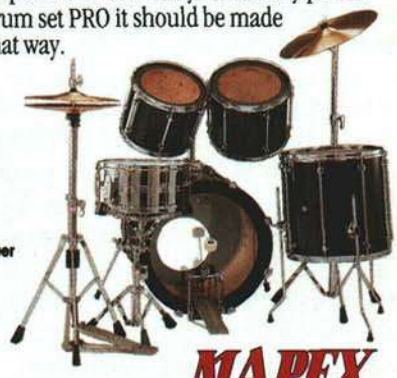

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Bobby Sanabria

Latin Player, Preacher, and Teacher

by T. Bruce Wittet

The recent movie *The Mambo Kings* is the story of the ascent and descent of two Cuban musicians in the New York of the 1950s. Music is everywhere—jazz, Latin, dance. In one scene, the Palladium is crowded with dancers, while on stage, Tito Puente is near the climax of a timbale solo. A revolver appears and someone hits the floor, smack in front of the bandstand. The music dies down, the police appear, and the night is over.

To Bobby Sanabria, that scene epitomizes the problems inherent in the film: "They could have done so much more," says Bobby. "They could have shown Dizzy playing at Birdland, with maybe a conga drummer sitting in. They could have shown the *connection,* the fusion, the interaction between the musicians! They trivialized it, man."

Triviality is just not Bobby Sanabria's modus operandi. He took great pains to achieve authenticity when recording the soundtrack to the movie—striving to capture both the unique sounds and the performances of the famous Cuban musicians of the day depicted in the film.

Bobby Sanabria is totally selfless. It's not that he doesn't have an ego, it's just that his attentions are directed outward; he dwells little upon his own frustrations. Where some would play a fill to express themselves, Bobby would play time. With his group Ascension, and with Mario Bauza's Afro-Cuban Jazz Orchestra, he takes the greatest pains to blend, to edit himself so that his part is tasteful and correct. Content to sit for sixty-four bars playing little more than hi-hat and bass drum, he's waiting for the right moment. Sometimes he's up on the ride bell, cranking out the rhythm pioneered by Latin drumset innovator Antonio Escollies with the Machito Orchestra five decades ago. Sometimes he's on the shell of the floor tom, executing the palito pattern—kicking it with snare drum shots meant to emulate timbale rimshots. All the while, the time feels smooth, in the tradition of, say, a Duke Ellington big band. But when Bobby *really* goes for it, odds are the same for a Buddy Rich-like barrage of doubles or a Tito Puente extrapolation across the toms.

Bobby campaigns for his musical heritage fifty-two weeks a year. He gets letters of appreciation from jazz festivals, arts foundations, and school boards, applauding his tireless efforts in promoting Afro-Cuban music. He edits the Latin Percussion company's newsletter, and has published articles there and in the pages of *Modern Drummer.* It's kind of a shame that his devotion is such that Bobby-the-musician (as opposed to PR man and educator) gets short shrift; he *can play.* Watching Bobby, one has the feeling that there is no musical style that he cannot tackle: Latin jazz, bebop, folkloric, rock, or funk. As he would say, "It's all in my toolbox, man."

Bobby once told a newspaper reporter that his Latin jazz big band, Ascension, was more a workshop than a fixed band. Incorporating a variety of influences, it emerged directly from his roots: "I'm what they call in New York City a Nuyorican," says Bobby. "My parents are from Puerto Rico, and I was born and raised in New York. I listened to the music my parents listened to: folkloric music from Puerto Rico—what we call Jibaro, which is music of Spanish and Indian descent from the mountainous regions.

"I grew up in the Melrose Projects," Bobby continues. "My father was a 'mambo-nick' in the 1950s. He'd go to the Palladium and dance to Tito Puente, Tito Rodriguez, and the great Machito Afro-Cuban orchestra. That whole scene in the '50s was very important, because it was the beginning of integration. At the Palladium, there were no color barriers. If you could dance and if you loved the music, you could hang. You would see Jewish people, Puerto Ricans, Italians, Cubans, Orientals, blacks—all dancing to the music. I tell my students that the first fusion band was Machito's band, not Miles Davis and *Bitches Brew.* They unified the heavy improvisational concept and harmonic complexity of jazz with Afro-Cuban rhythms. That 'mambo-nick' generation influenced not only music, but fashion and art. That's what *The Mambo Kings* unfortunately failed to bring out."

Bobby's criticism of the movie's treatment of the Hispanic experience does not extend to the musical director, Robert Kraft. Like Bobby, Kraft was deeply concerned with capturing

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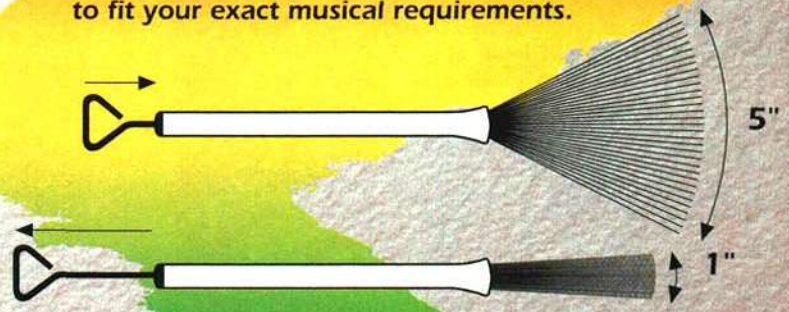

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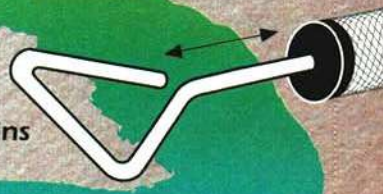

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the authentic sound of the era. "That was a challenge," says Bobby, "because I had to play in the style of the different drummers of the period. Ubaldo Nieto, with the Machito Orchestra, for example, was the greatest timbale player for big band style. I also had to play in the style of Tito Puente, circa 1951-'52. Every timbale player in those days had their own particular way of phrasing when they would ride on the mambo bell—or when they would play cascara, which is the side of the shell of the timbale. You could tell right away, 'Oh, that's Uba!' For example, he would play double-paila, which is playing on both sides of the shells, with each hand. He'd rock the band! Tony Escollies, the first drummer in the Machito Orchestra, developed the pattern that every timbale player uses today on the mambo bell. Tony also had a thing called *telegraphia:* He'd play the clave on the mambo bell with one hand, but fill in 8th notes, completely, with the right hand. This stuff I hear about ghost notes today—that was happening forty years ago, man!"

Sanabria is surprisingly well-versed in tradition, considering his relatively young age of 35. Growing up in New York, he was exposed to the same popular music that diverted other musicians to become rock and fusion players. He heard the Beatles, Tower of Power, the Mahavishnu Orchestra, and Cold Blood—but always mitigated by Tito Puente, Tito Rodriguez, Duke Ellington, Buddy Rich, and other artists from his father's diverse record collection.

A prevailing notion is that today's Latin drumset player is carving out new territory with every stroke. Salsa bands, like that of Poncho Sanchez, reinforce the belief that the drumset is foreign to Latin music. "That's a misconception," says Bobby adamantly. "There were a lot of great Latin drummers. Pato Vaz was an excellent trap player *and* timbale player, as is Tito Puente. Willie Rodriguez was like the Steve Gadd of the 1950s; he was on so many sessions it was ridiculous. Alberto Calderon, who was with Xavier Cugat, is another great drummer. Jimmy 'LaVaca' Santiago was playing stuff like Changuito [of the group Los Van Van, creator of the songo rhythm] in the '50s already! From my point of view he was the father of independence in Latin drumset drumming. Willie Bobo is important because he synthesized the little ornamentations that jazz drummers do—drags, ruffs, press rolls, and so forth—with typical timbale playing. And Humberto Morales used to play a double-bass kit with timbales next to his hi-hat.

"There would be no jazz drumming as we know it today," Bobby states emphatically, "if Max Roach and Kenny Clarke hadn't checked out the Latin guys. When Max Roach and Kenny Clarke started liberating the bass drum and the snare drum in the '40s, the bass player and the piano player could change the patterns. The soloists could change. The concept of bebop drumming came from those guys checking out the Machito Orchestra and watching the interaction between the conga player and the bongo player: The conga player would keep a steady rhythm and the bongo player could converse. That's also part of the African tradition: The drums converse. And that's what started happening between the bass drum and the snare drum. In jazz music we only have one drummer, so the *limbs* converse."

To the question, "Can Afro-Cuban drumming be *taught,* or does one have to be born into it?" Bobby replies, "Sure, it can be taught—probably more easily to kids than to adults, who have years of excess baggage to get rid of. I get kids to clap the clave, and they *all* clap it, man. Then I get some 25-year-old guy from Europe or from the Midwest to do the same thing, and he's going, 'Where's the downbeat, man? Where's 1?' If you're a Latin musician, it's easier for you to absorb other kinds of music. If you take a simple cascara pattern, for example, and hit 2 and 4 on the snare, you get typical heavy-metal drumming. Or play a simple funk rhythm: You're in clave.

"The problem in learning Latin music," Bobby continues, "is that everybody looks at it superficially. Mambo, for example, is not just a rhythm; it's a whole concept of writing. You have different melodic lines—with rhythms attached to them, of course—and they all converge at a key point, which is the clave. *[He sings the various lines, while clapping the clave.]* You've got all these layers; that's what mambo *is,* because 'mambo' is the Congalese word for 'chant' or 'song.'"

Perhaps the reason that it's so difficult to teach someone how to play in clave is that it's not a learning exercise; it's a life's work. "But you *can* learn the vocabulary," says Bobby, "just like with any language. In Cuban music, the clave is your alphabet. Then you have to learn how to construct phrases. I teach how to play phrases on the '2' side of the clave, and then on the '3' side, which are typical, and then how to combine both phrases.

"You know," Bobby continues, "it doesn't mean jack to me that you can play songo on the drumset, if you can't do cascara and play the left hand on the timbales. If you don't know how to do that, how are you going to do it on the floor tom and make it sound authentic? If I call you up, and you say, "Yeah, I play Latin rhythms on the drumset"—but I need you for a recording session tomorrow on timbales—you should be able to do it, man. You have to be able to do it all—at least on a rudimentary level. Art Blakey used to use his elbow all the time to bend the pitch on the drums. You know where he got that? From Candido playing the conga drums. I learned that because I played with Candido and asked him. One of the things young musi-

"There would be no jazz drumming as we know it today if Max Roach and Kenny Clarke hadn't checked out the Latin guys."

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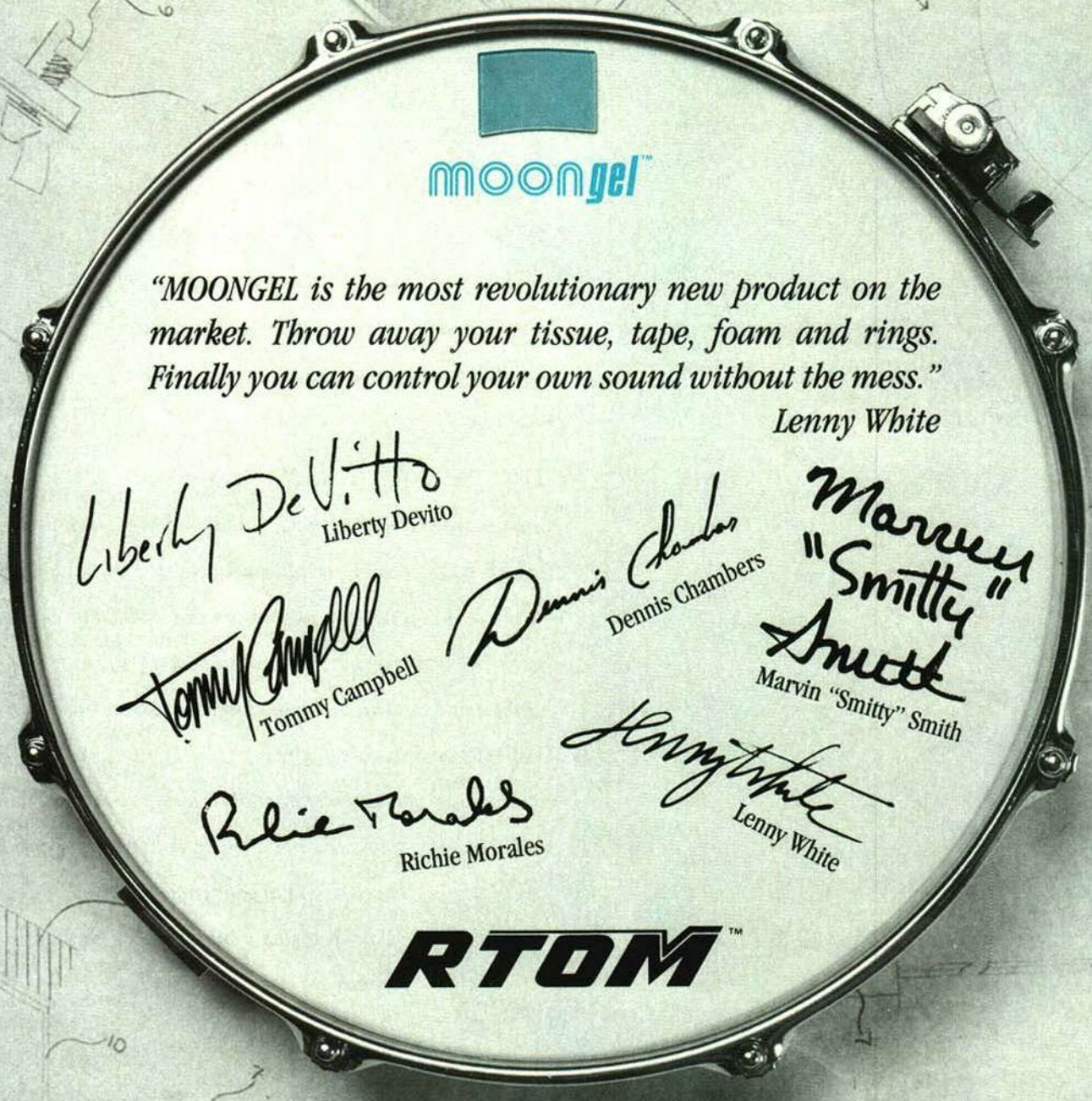

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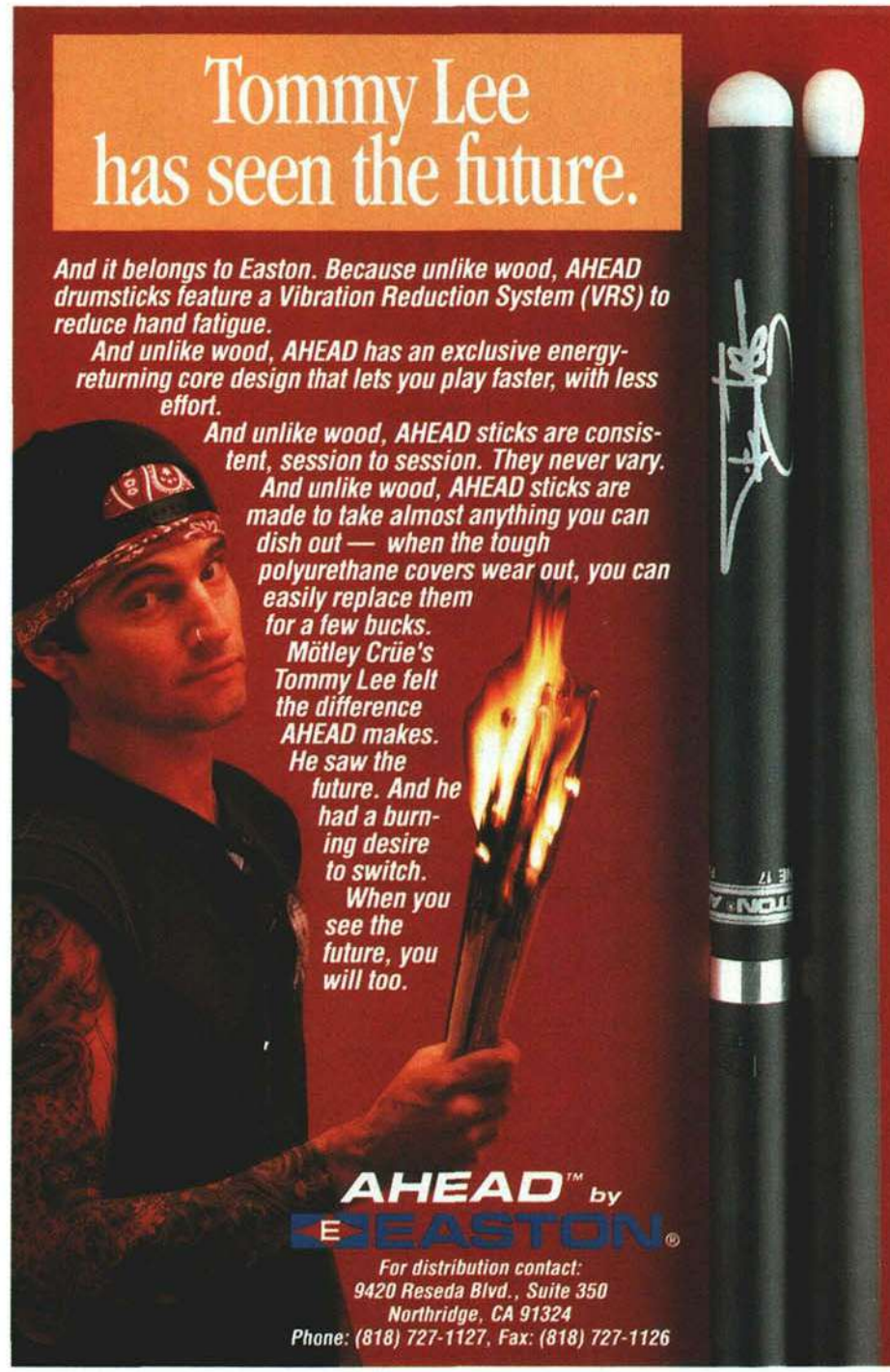
cians should do when they play with an older musician is ask questions. You'd be surprised what you learn—little tricks of the trade that give *conviction* to your playing."

Sometimes, when playing with Cuban fusion groups, Bobby performs three-over-two fills—ostensibly in 4/4 time, but with a strong hint of Afro-6/8. "That's from the polyrhythmic nature of our music," he explains. "I could have the clave going, like this [*he claps son clave, 3/2*], and I could sing something in 6/8 that would fit perfectly over it. Now, in the rhumba clave, you really hear this feeling of binary and tertiary time going against each other, because *that* clave really delineates 6/8 pulse. When you listen to drum solos in the Cuban tradition, you hear all this bending and stretching of the time, because you're hearing figures from binary time and from tertiary time. When I hear so-called fusion drummers playing Latin music—they always play some quasi-Latin, songo, or Brazilian thing—or when one of my students tries, I laugh. But after they've been studying with me for a few weeks, they see that it was all cross-clave, and that the music is being performed on a very superficial level. It's close—but no cigar, you know?"

Bobby's method of tuning is based solidly in the Afro-Cuban tradition. "I want my tom-toms to have tones," he says, "so I can play melodically. That's the reason any drummer should use more toms—not just for doing big fills around the drums. I always try to tune in fourths, because those are the intervals we use in the tuning of hand drums. With a fourth you get a nice, open, suspended sound that works in many musical situations. I always tune the snare drum very high, to give the aura of a timbale. The approach I have on the drumset when I'm playing Cuban music is like the timbale player. My responsibility is to keep the rhythm section and the rest of the band together, of course—but also to get the kicks and to add my 'voice' to the music."

Bobby's choice of cymbals is consistent with his approach to the drums. He goes for clarity and precision, but he also requires cymbals that evoke the classic sounds of the past. "I endorse Sabian cymbals," says Bobby, "and I use the *DeJohnette* ride and the *El Sabor* crash/ride cymbal. I use the *El Sabor* for everything: for Latin, jazz, and rock. I use *Fusion Hats,* and a splash. Sometimes I use a 20" HH medium ride, but I really love that 22" *DeJohnette.* A lot of guys cheat on the fast ride rhythms, and that's why they like those K cymbals: They have the sustain that covers everything up. I tell my students that I want to hear every note. Tony Williams uses K's, but he also uses a big stick, so you hear a big 'ching.' But a lot of the kids coming up—I won't mention any names—use those K's, and I don't hear *definition.*

"I use Vic Firth *5A* sticks with my signature on them, and the *Alex Acuna*



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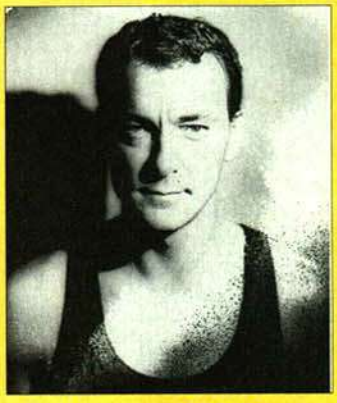

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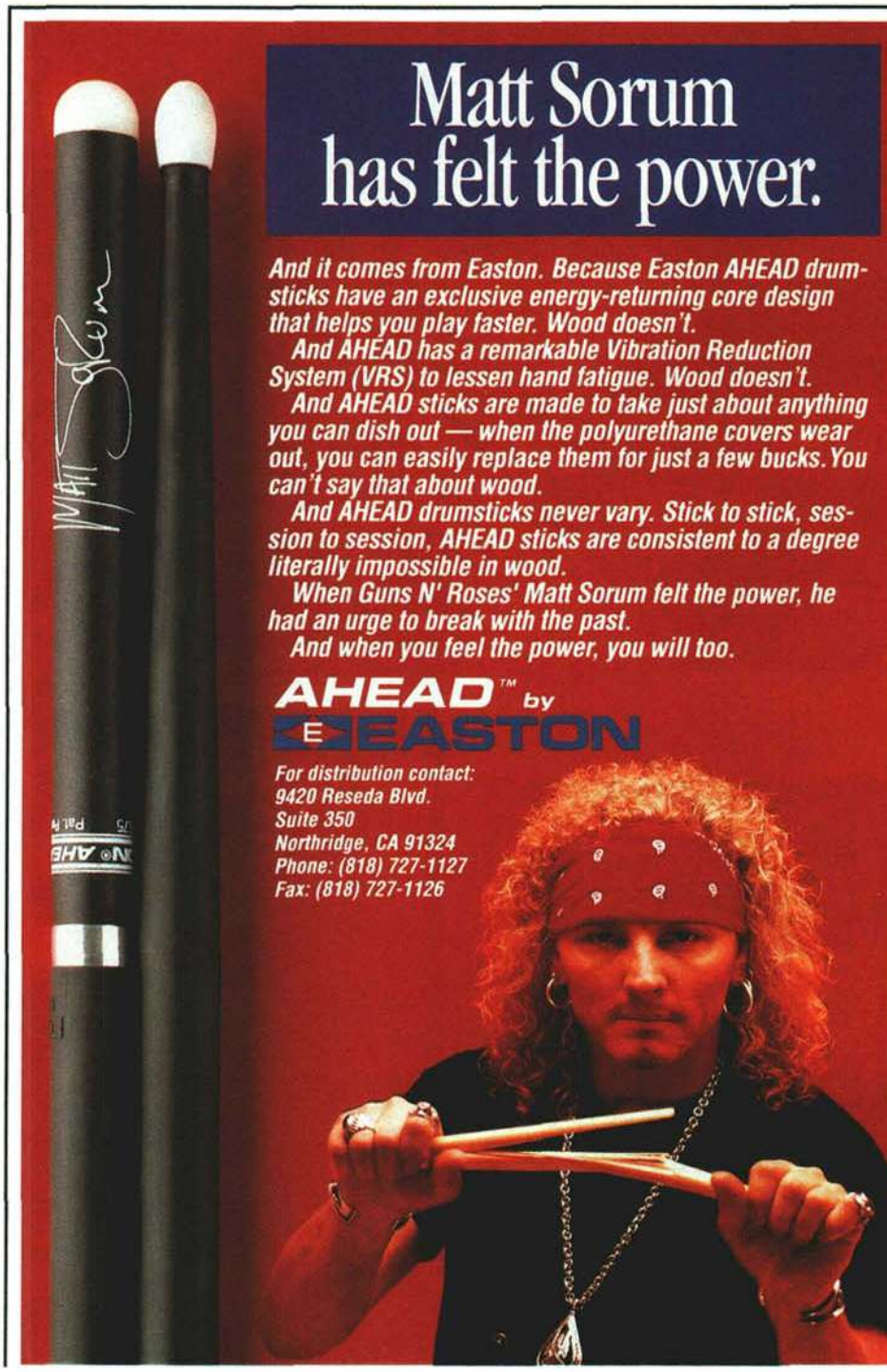
Bobby has been teaching at Drummers Collective for several years. Most of his students are interested in learning the rhythms of Afro-Cuban music, and Bobby complies. But he also insists that they investigate basic technique—just as his mentor, Keith Copeland, insisted he do at Berklee College. "Keith really worked on my fundamentals," says Bobby. "He already knew I had a concept, but I needed independence, in terms of a jazz context—which in turn opened me up to utilizing that in every other style of music."

"At Berklee," continues Bobby, "they had a course called 'Writing in the Style of Duke Ellington.' I thought, why not 'Writing in the Style of Rene Hernandez,' the greatest arranger of Cuban music? The music is available, but 'jazz' has been marketed as a certain form of music. Although the intentions are good, a very visceral art form is being taught in a very academic way."

Bobby takes a very different approach to musical education. "For the last ten years," he says, "I've been lecturing to school kids and performing with Ascension, through the auspices of an association called Arts Connection. My purpose as an educator is to communicate, to illuminate, and to teach something to the audience. For example, if you hear something you like, seek out more of it! If you go into the history of rock 'n' roll, you'll learn about Cuban music. The early arrangers of R&B were transferring the Cuban bass line to baritone saxophone, and so on. The more you find out about something, the more you realize that we're all related. One of the things that gratifies me is when I look in the audience, and the Hispanic kid, the African-American kid, the Jewish kid, the Irish kid, and the Italian kid are all looking at each other, thinking, 'We're all related.' They start to look at each other like equals."

Bobby's plans for the future include releasing a CD from Ascension, more playing and recording with Mario Bauza, and more teaching at the Collective and around town.



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continued from page 9

live work with Wynonna Judd, and is expected to go on tour with Hornsby this spring.

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Roy Lawrence on Eugenius's debut Atlantic record, *Oomalama.*

Brant Bjork on tour with Kyuss, supporting their new album, *Blues For The Red Sun.*

Joey Kramer on Aerosmith's new *Get A Grip,* due out in March.

Vicki Foxx on the debut album by the Vince Neil Band, due out this month.

Rod Morgenstein has been doing some live dates with the Dixie Dregs.

Janet Beveridge Bean (drums and vocals) working on a new album with Eleventh Dream Day.

Ringo Starr (and **Jim Keltner)** can be heard on B.B. King's boxed set compilation called *King Of The Blues.*

Tucker Fleming on Chris Gaffney's new album, *Mi Vida Loca.*

Rick Diaz on tour with Young Turk in support of their debut album, *N.E. 2nd Avenue.*

Andre Bonter now on tour with Poorboys, supporting their self-titled Hollywood Records release.

Larry Hill playing with Curb recording artist Duncan.

Tim Hedge is touring with Billy Dean in support of his new, self-titled release.

Larry Crockett has recently been on tour with Martha Reeves, as well as playing some dates with George Clinton and Bootsy Collins.

Between Tin Machine projects, **Hunt Sales** is fronting his band, Hunt Sales & The Big Three, with **David Eagle** on drums. Hunt's tune from *Tin Machine II,* "Stateside," can also be heard on the soundtrack to *Dr. Giggles.*

Joe Franco on tour with Widowmaker, as well as on new releases by Bad Circus, Doro Pesch, and Taylor Dayne.

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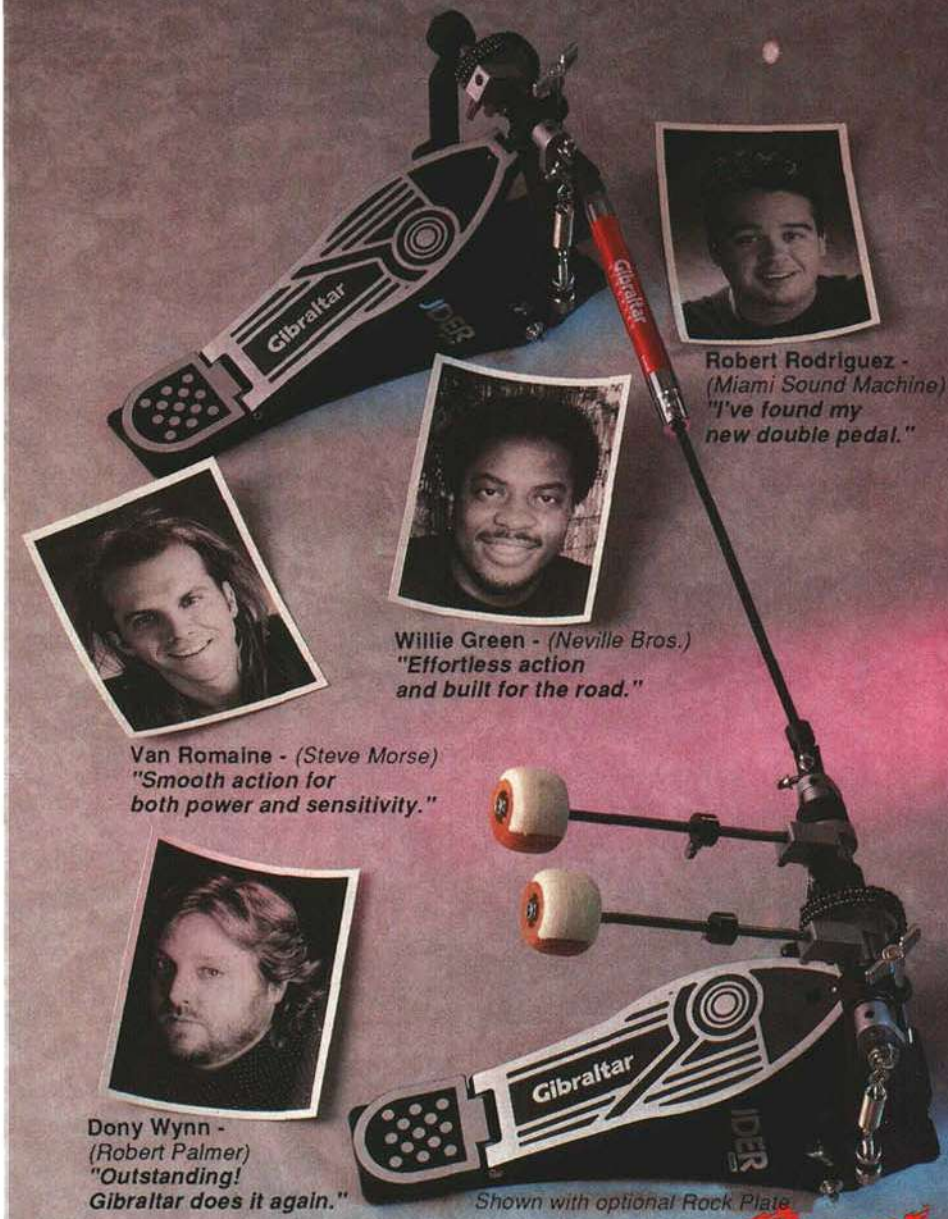

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continued from page 16

can get it.

Pierre LeGendre
Huntsville, Ontario, Canada

A The software you're referring to is called *Drumfile.* Created by Donny Blank, it was bought out by Passport. That company no longer supports it, but it was quite popular when first introduced. As a result, you may be able to find some leftover copies in software supply stores, or by advertising in the classified sections of computer-enthusiast magazines and newsletters (and also in *MD's Drum Market).*

PAISTE INFORMATION

Q I have a Paiste *Sound Creation* cymbal. It's 18" in diameter and has a bell that's sort of "squared off" at the top, rather than domed. I obtained it from a friend many years ago, and I can't seem to obtain any information on its origin or value. Can you help me?

Shaun Cooperider
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Q I've recently acquired a 16" crash and a 20" ride with the words "Ludwig Standard Paiste" etched into them. I have never heard of this series of cymbals. They also appear to be between silver and brass in color. Could you give me more information on this line?

EJ. McMahon
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A Erik Paiste, of Paiste America, provided us with the following answers.

"Shaun, your 18" cymbal is a *Short Crash Sound Creation.* The shape of the bell is an inherent part of the design, intended to shorten the duration of the crash. It was only used in the *Sound Creation* line. This cymbal is still available by special order, and its current retail value is $262. The value of your particular cymbal would, of course, depend on its condition.

"In regard to E.J.'s cymbals: During the '50s and '60s, the Ludwig drum company distributed Paiste cymbals in the U.S. At the time, the professional Paiste line was the *Formula 602* (which is still available today). Additionally, Paiste also made a second, less expensive cymbal line for Ludwig, called 'Ludwig Standard.' They also had the Paiste name on them. This line was made from nickelsilver, which is an alloy containing chiefly copper, just like all other cymbals. Its original color would have been almost like a brass color, but darker, and with an olive tint. Your cymbal was most likely made in the '60s."

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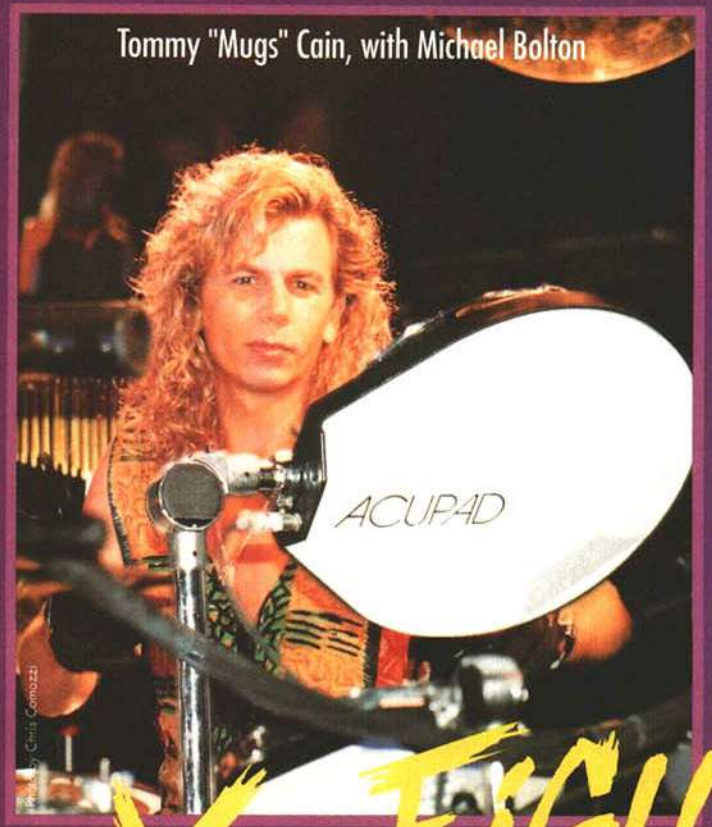
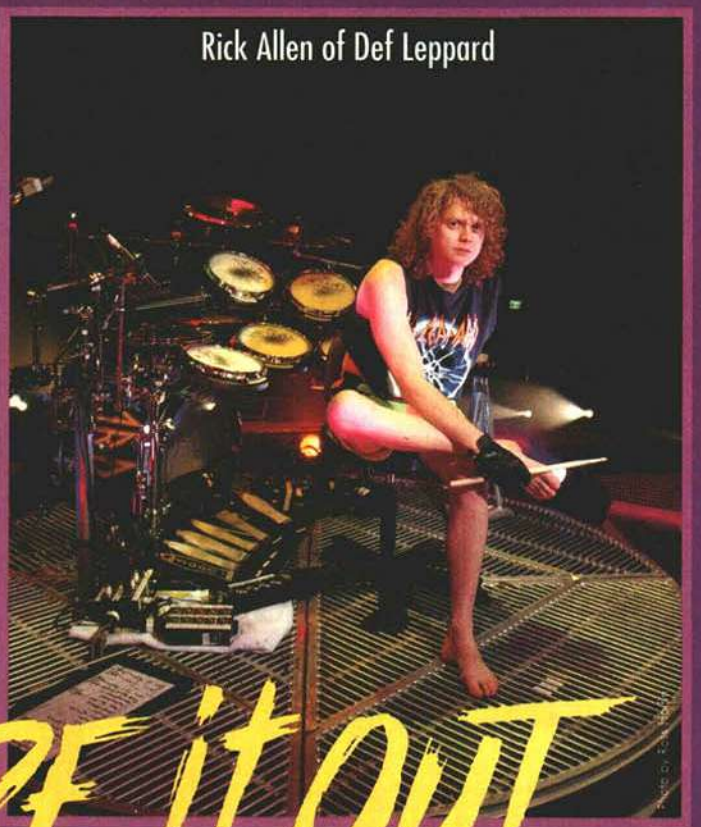
Steve Glover
El Segundo CA

A Bill Detamore, owner of Pork Pie Percussion and an authority on drum customizing and refinishing, cautions against the type of treatment you are considering. "Have you ever had a floor tom that sounded like a basketball being bounced on a gym floor?" asks Bill. "That sound is caused by a coating on the inside of the drum. The shells you are talking about are made of Philippine mahogany. This wood is very soft, and tends to give you a slightly muted or muffled sound. I'm afraid that if you put a coating on the inside of your kit, you could end up with many unwanted overtones. Also, with the materials that would be safe for you to use (varnish or lacquer), I don't think you would find enough difference in sound to merit the number of hours you'll spend on the job. My best advice is to find a drum with a higher-quality shell.

"By the way, an easy way to solve that 'basketball' sound is to run a piece of foam from a top lug to a bottom lug within the shell. (The foam used on Remo *Muffl's* is perfect.) Use the lug screws to hold the foam in place. Start with one piece, then add one or two more if necessary. The idea is to break up the soundwave that is bouncing from side to side within the shell."

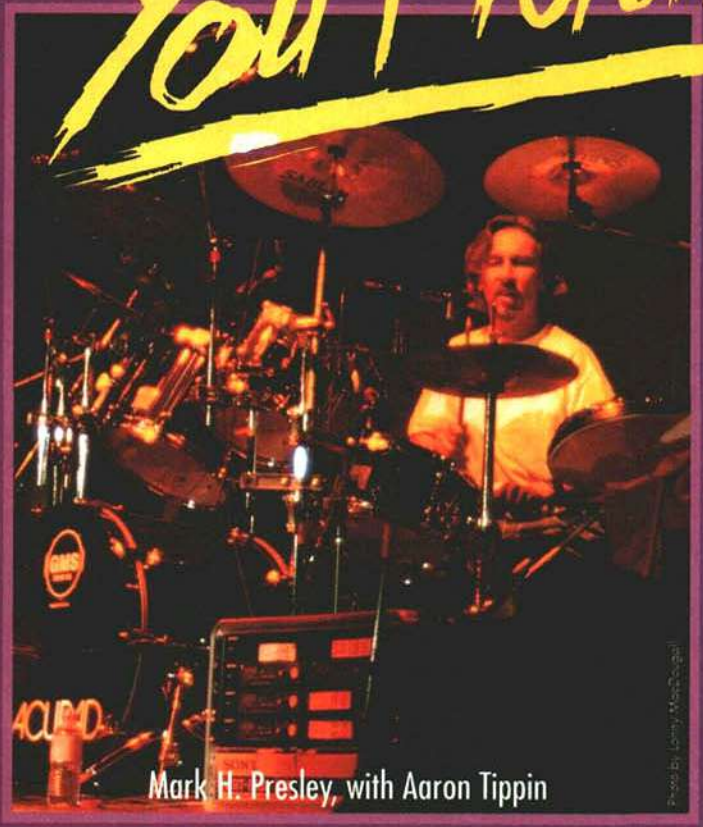


Tommy "Mugs" Cain, with Michael Bolton



Rick Allen of Def Leppard

You Figure it Out



Mark H. Presley, with Aaron Tippin

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LARRIE LONDIN

continued from page 27

Around that same time, Larrie cut the England Dan & John Ford Coley hits "I'd Really Love To See You Tonight" and "Nights Are Forever," with producer Kyle Lehning (now executive vice president and general manager of Asylum Records/Nashville). He and Kyle had actually been working together for a couple of years, but these were Lehning's first big hits—and Larrie became instrumental in much of his successes to follow. In fact, the last record Larrie ever cut was Randy Travis's "If I Didn't Have You," which was produced by Lehning.

Keyboardist Shane Keister recalls cutting "I'd Really Love To See You Tonight": "I remember that tempo was a real critical issue on that session. Larrie felt the tempo in a certain place, and Kyle was hearing it in a different place. The more we played it, the more everybody realized that Larrie was right. He was almost *always* right. I remember Kyle giving him the benefit of the doubt and saying, 'Okay, let's try it here and see if it feels right,' and it did."

Lehning laughs as he recalls another session: "We were working on an artist in the late '70s. He was very, very picky. I came home one night late after we worked, and I had a message on the code-a-phone. It was Larrie singing to the tune of 'Please Release Me,' singing, 'Please release me, let me go, 'cause I can't play this shit no mo'.' So I called him up, and he was going, 'Man, you've got to let me out of this, I'm dying. It's not going to be any good.' I was cracking up and said, 'Okay, if you don't want to play, you don't have to.'"

Kyle Lehning also remembers a very poignant and revealing time with Larrie. "I don't think I ever told anybody this story, but I guess I was becoming too dictatorial in the studio in the late '70s. Larrie used this big set of toms, and we were working on something where I made him get rid of all but three of them. I just took them down, and he got really mad at me. He played differently without all of them. It forced him to think about his fills. He ended up, for some reason, thinking I didn't like the way he played, so he finally just said, 'You know, you just really need to get a

Tony Williams photo by Michele Clement, S. F., CA

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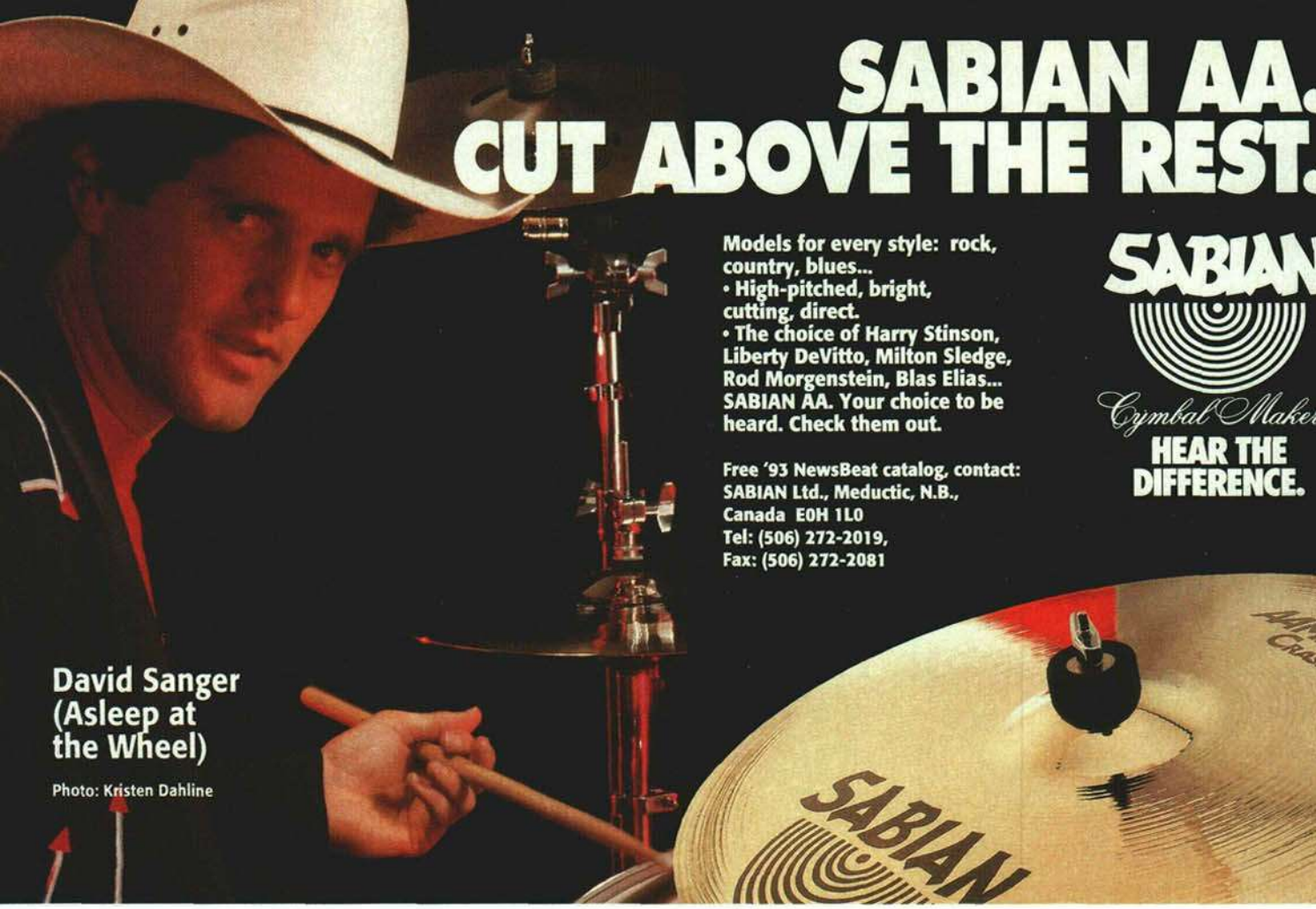

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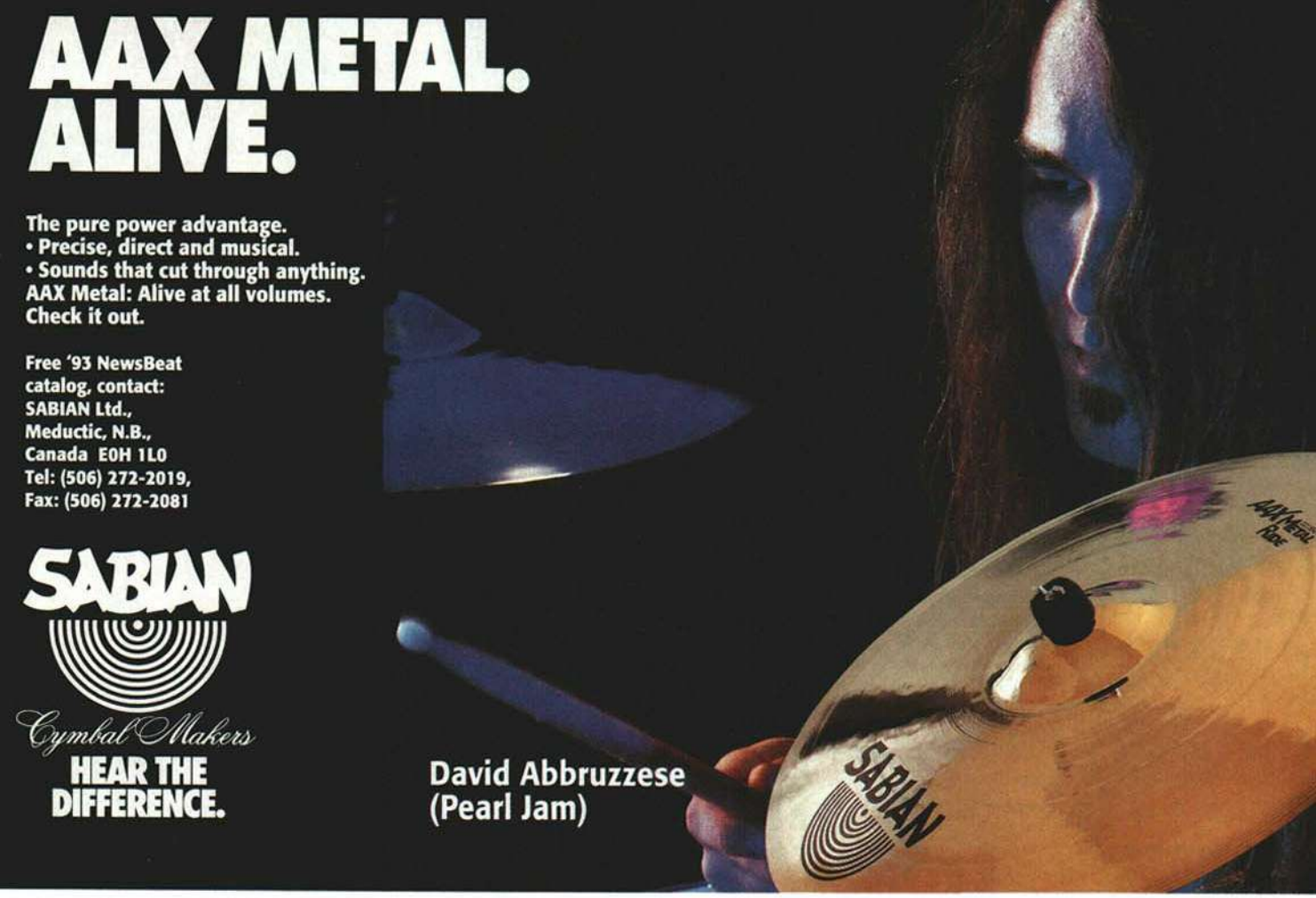
different drummer. I'm not doing what you want, and I just want to play the way I play.' So for about a year, we didn't work together. He just wouldn't take the job if I called him. There are some fine players in town, but Larrie was Larrie. There were just certain things he did that were special.

"About a year went by," Kyle continues, "and he had gotten involved in producing some stuff with Bobby Thompson, Reggie Young, and Joe Osborn. They were a production team called the Hitmen. He called me one day and said, 'Can we have lunch?' I said sure, and we went out to lunch. He was so sweet. He said, 'You know, I want to apologize. Since I've been producing, my whole attitude toward this has changed. I really do understand now that it's nothing personal, but as the producer, you've just got to get it the way you feel is right. You don't have to ever hire me again, and I'll understand if you've gotten somebody else you want to work with, but I just want you to know that I've learned something.' So I said, 'What are you doing at 2:00?" I think it's pretty neat when someone can learn and is man enough to change his mind about something. And he was passionate about both decisions."

Luckily they did reconcile, for there was a large body of work to be shared by the two of them, such as many of Dan Seals' hits and Randy Travis's "On The Other Hand." "There was definitely some fairy dust floating around on *that* record," Lehning says. "Another one of my favorite records that I made on Randy was called 'Too Gone Too Long,' which is a monstrous swing-feeling thing. Country can swing in a hokey way,



but Larrie could make a country record swing in the hippest kind of way. There were some songs for Randy that I just didn't feel anyone else could play. So we'd re-schedule the session until Larrie was available.

"Larrie was a very graceful leader in terms of the session. He was always the foundation, but he knew he was part of a team. He listened to everybody, especially singers. He had a real special way in the studio of making the singers feel special, but he always had a way of reminding them that they were only part of the band. It was his sense of justice. He wanted everybody to know that they were there for a reason and nobody was any more or less important than the next guy."

David Hungate continues that train of thought: "Larrie not only stood up for himself, he stood up for others when he felt they were being treated unfairly. A couple of years ago, Larrie was doing a session for a producer who also happened to be one of the most powerful music industry figures in Nashville. This guy was apparently having a bad day and was taking it out on a young second engineer, humiliating the kid mercilessly in front of a roomful of musicians. This behavior didn't mesh at all with Larrie's sense of fairness, and he proceeded to get right in the producer's face to let him know quite emphatically that he couldn't treat people that way, and by doing so in his presence, he was running the very real risk of getting his ass kicked. Here was a producer who could give him $30,000 worth of sessions a year, and Larrie was ready to say to hell with it to come to the defense of someone he only knew casually. The

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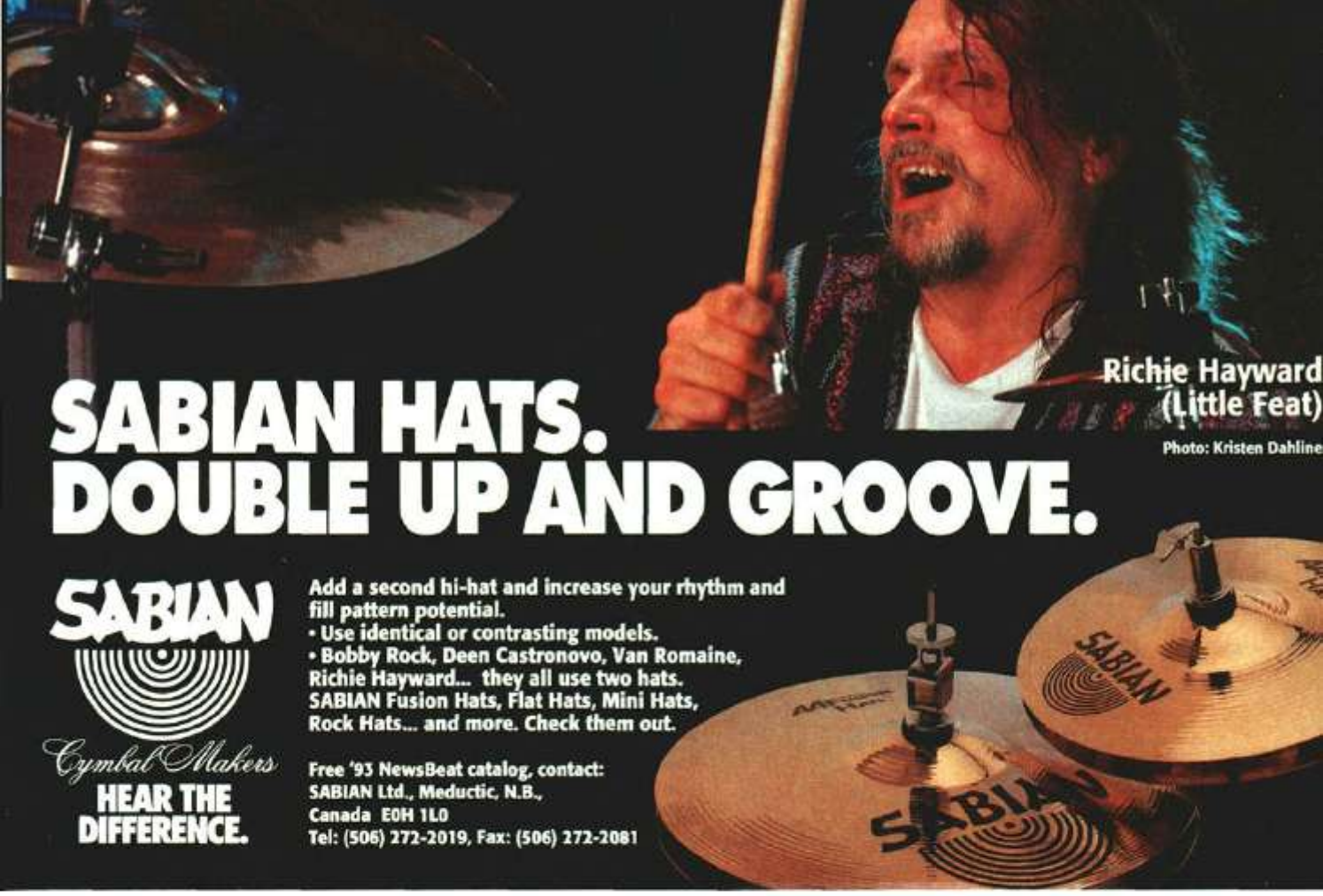
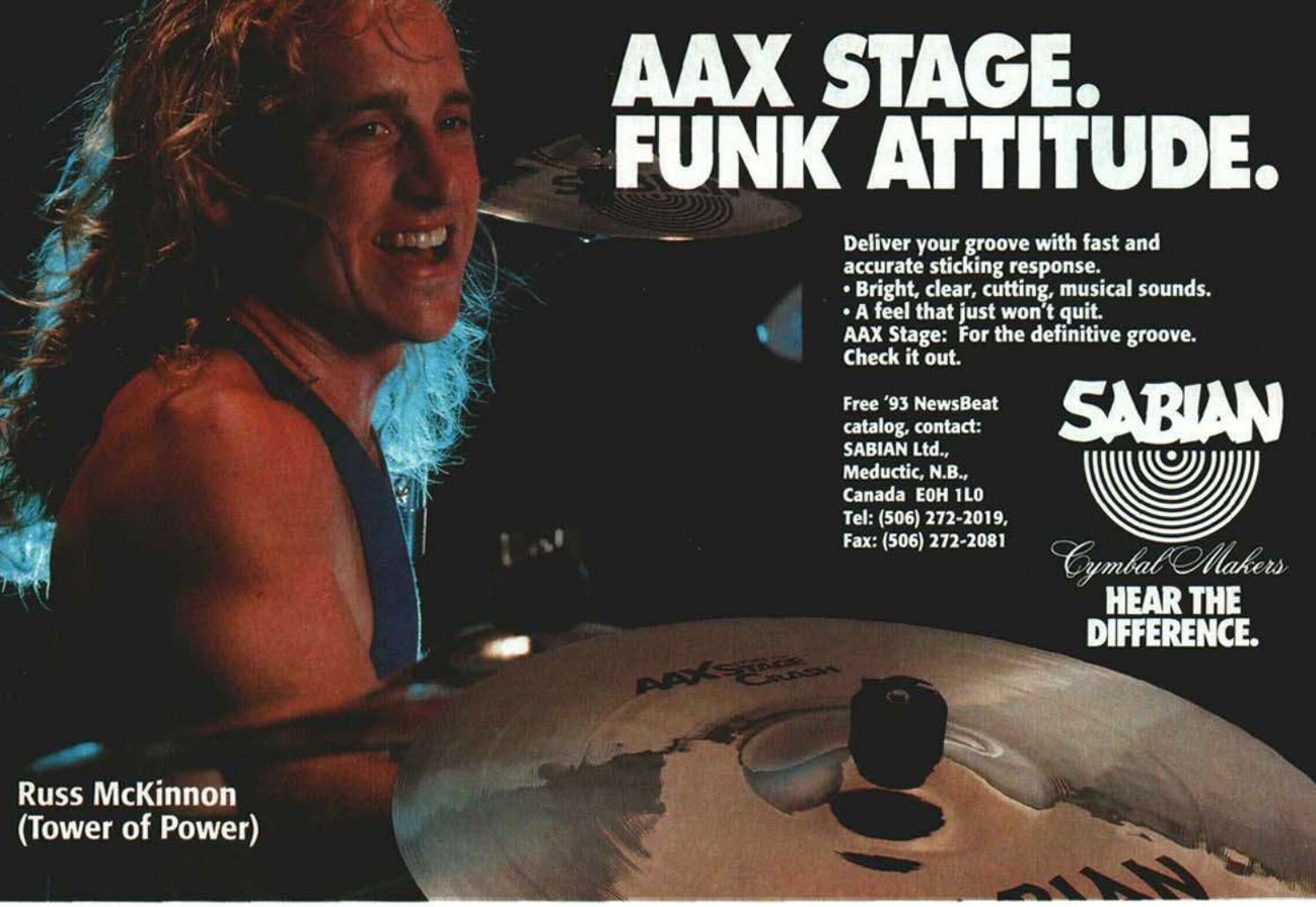


coda to that story is that the producer knew he was wrong, kept hiring Larrie, and mourned like the rest of us when we lost him."

"I remember the first time I worked with Larrie," artist Vince Gill recalls. "The session was called for 10:00 in the morning and I figured it would take a couple of hours for them to get a drum sound, so I didn't show up until 11:30. But they had been ready to go at 10:00. Larrie had been in the night before getting drum sounds, and he let me have it right off the bat. He had the best way of busting people—everybody," Gill laughs. "It didn't matter if you were a big-league producer or just a little guy.

"My favorite memory of Larrie, though, was the first time we ever played live together," Gill continues. "It was a Rosanne Cash rehearsal. I remember getting ready to do the first song. I had done my homework; I knew every note off the record. I had it down, boy. Larrie clicked his sticks together and counted four. Then he started playing, and I'll never forget what it felt like as long as I live. I was so blown away. I don't think I've ever been that blown away by a musician. It was the first time playing music that I ever *felt* the music. Nobody was better than him. Nobody plays with the sensitivity that he played with. And he played every groove. Some guys can just play certain grooves, but Larrie played every one."

Producer (and current president of Liberty Records/Nashville) Jimmy Bowen felt the same way. He says that, as a California transplant, he was accustomed to a certain caliber of



excellence, and Londin fit the bill. "A lot of country drummers would show up on a session with two or three drums. Larrie would show up with everything they made. He was always looking to the future with sounds. I called him up and said, 'I heard they have electric drums now. Give me some.' At the next session he was there, tuning those electric drums, cussing me all the way," Bowen laughs. "But he was just as bad as I was about wanting something new. He was progressive.

"I remember the first session I ever did with him," Bowen continues. "I'm a stickler about everything sounding right. We were taking a break, and I didn't like the way the kick drum sounded. I went out, sat down at the drums, and with all my might I tried to get that kick drum beater up to to the bass drum. I could not believe how strong he was. There was one night we were mixing, and Larrie had already gone home. Somehow one or two backbeats on the snare got erased, but his kit was out there, so I thought, 'No problem.' I went out and I couldn't hit as hard as he could. I had to bring him back in."

Bowen also recalls the Hank Williams, Jr. session for "A Country Boy Can Survive." "We all went out to get some fresh air, and the engineer came out with no blood in his face. 'I've erased the kick drum,' he said. Larrie looked at him like he wanted to kill him. Of all things to have to do—to have to put the foundation under the house after it's built. Larrie didn't say a word. He just gritted his teeth, went in, and played the entire song in three minutes, perfect, one take."

IN MEMORY OF

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Shane Keister recalls a session they did for producer Norbert Putnam: "It might have been for Dan Fogelberg. The demo of the song we were doing had a percussionist playing conga and cowbell, but we didn't have a percussionist on the date. Norbert asked Larrie what he wanted to do. Did he want to overdub? Larrie said, 'Let me see what I can do.' We ran the song down a few times and started cutting it. When we listened to the take, it sounded like there was a percussionist—I'm talking about full execution of fills, hi-hat things, splashes—and then there was a cowbell and some kind of conga-sounding thing. It sounded like every once and a while he was putting in a cuica, too. Norbert soloed the kit in playback, and it sounded impossible for one person to have played that."

Bassist Lee Sklar loved working with Larrie as well. "I know a lot of great players who are considered world-class drummers, but there are only a handful of them that I feel a kind of symbiotic relationship with. Larrie was definitely one of them. If I walked into the studio and saw his kit there, I knew I would have a good time regardless, because we were going to *make* it a good time.

"A lot of people may not give much credit to country musicians, but I have gone through everything from pop to fusion, legit orchestral work, and country, and I would have to say that country has, by far, the most gifted players I've ever worked with. There are certain chops that are necessary, though a lot of people who listen to country think it's so simple. I have people come up to me and ask, 'How can you play that stuff?' I say, 'There is a challenge to simplicity. If you are given a piece of music, and instead of eighty notes to the bar, you're only going to have four, then you really have to think about *which* four are going to make that work the best and how they're going to feel.'" Sklar adds that Reba McEntire's last record *(For My Broken Heart)* comes to mind when asked about Larrie, because it was a very emotional project.

During the early '80s, Larrie traveled with Rodney Crowell and with Rosanne Cash, both times as part of the Cherry Bomb Band. Crowell, who had met him in the early '70s while writing songs for a

LARRIE LONDIN
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IN MEMORY OF LARRIE LONDIN. A GREAT DRUMMER, FRIEND AND ENDURING INSPIRATION.

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company Jerry Reed owned, called Londin in '79 to record *What Will The Neighbors Think* in Sausalito, California. "Larrie was a feel monster," Crowell states. "He played like a cool cat. He had that real inner clock that was so feel-oriented. I called him the human waterbed. Sometimes he would just get rockin' and rollin' like an ocean. And I could just feel it. That's why I loved to work with Larrie—I could feel the rhythm. He was a great dancer as well, kind of like Jackie Gleason in that way. He was a big man, but he could get his body to move sort of like an ocean.

"On some of his early work in Nashville, he was kind of recognized as a drummer with a lot of tom-toms and fills. There was a bit of a funk factor that he brought into Nashville that people were scarfing up on in the beginning. When I started working with him, I said, 'Hey man, let's get rid of all these fills and toms. Let's just play grooves.' I was really influenced by Big Joe Turner records, and Larrie got real intrigued.

"Larrie had the uncanny ability to put the kick drum on 1 and then really lay the snare to the very back of 2 and 4. The first thing that comes to mind is 'Seven Year Ache,' which I made with Rosanne Cash. It's entirely a groove track, and I haven't been able to trace any records prior to it that went to that pulse groove the way that one did. That was a basic tracking session where we layed it down. There are no fills whatsoever. It's just all kick drum, snare drum, and maybe a little bit of cymbals. I stripped everything down except the drum track, and rebuilt that record entirely to Larrie's existing track. I didn't do anything to it—no splicing to make his groove tighter or anything. He didn't even play to a click. We threw the click out because Larrie had the ability to play a feel and let it breathe without slowing down or speeding up.

"A record of mine that I loved the drum track on was 'Stars On The Water,'" Crowell goes on. "Again, we were experimenting with the no-fills concept. It just started off with this kick drum and snare feel that Larrie could play. The way he would kind of rake the hi-hat, he would get this little bit of shuffle to go along with this real straight thing. It is a very simple, beautiful drum track. There's also a record I did with Bobby Bare called 'Droppin' Out Of Sight.' It's a monstrous shuffle groove, which was really an example of how Larrie played the kick drum right on 1 and 3, but really layed the snare back to the point where he would get this groove cradle. It was incredible.

"As for live, playing with him was so comfortable. It was like having the human waterbed on stage. Playing with him live was like having your own private cloud to just lie on and float. It was beautiful."

"Larrie really opened my eyes to what a drummer could be," Rosanne Cash says. "He was the first drummer I ever met who listened to lyrics. He was so sensitive, with so much compassion—not only in his playing, but as a human being. I've never met another musician like him, because of his incredible sensitivity and compassion and the ability to

LARRIE LONDIN

Guitar Man (Elvis Presley)
When You're Hot, You're Hot (Jerry Reed)
Stay In Tune (Chet Atkins)
Twang Bar King (Adrian Belew)
Street Talk (Steve Perry)
Always & Forever (Randy Travis)

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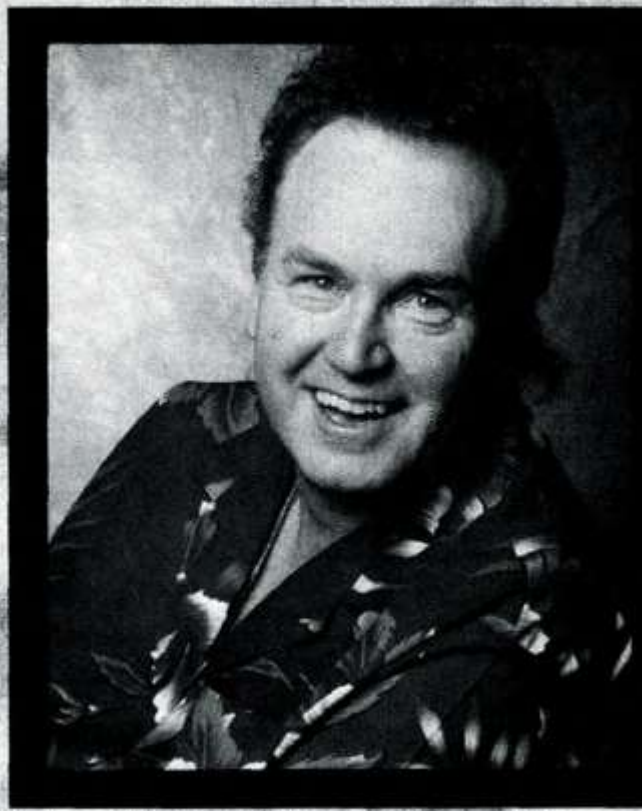

get to the essence of what a song was and to see the essence of what a human being was. He was special."

For Steve Perry, Larrie was the answer to a great dilemma. Late in 1984 in Los Angeles, while writing for his solo album, *Street Talk,* Perry began the elusive search for the right drummer to play the material. "There are some incredible players in this town, but I was looking for a vibe thing, not just a guy who had good time or a guy who would do whatever I wanted him to do," Perry states. "I wanted someone who could bring their spirit and life into something and make it more than just another track, someone who poured their heart and soul into the song and put an identity into it. I was writing songs with Randy Goodrum, and we had finished 'Foolish Heart' and were working on 'She's Mine,' which was a totally different pocket. He knew my problems with finding a drummer, and he suggested Larrie.

"We flew Larrie out and set up in Amigo studio to run through the songs," Steve continues. "Randy Goodrum started the intro music on the Fender Rhodes to 'She's Mine.' It had this beautiful little arpeggio that he did so beautifully, and at the right time, the music is supposed to come in. God, it's unbelievable—I can remember it like it was yesterday. Larrie just hit the China cymbal and the snare drum—*pow, pow*—and then the downbeat came in from a legacy of a knowledge of R&B and a sense of strength that was older than his chronological age."

Randy Goodrum laughs, "I promise you, it was about halfway through the third bar when Steve looked at me and said, 'He's the one.'"

"I must tell you, for a picky son of a bitch like me, it was like finding an island in the middle of an ocean," says Perry, who actually gave Larrie a piece of the album. "Maybe because Larrie was a singer, too, he would pay attention to what the singer was trying to say, and that's not something you're going to get from drum lessons. It's not something you get from sitting with metronomes, although that is also important—and it's not something you're going to get from being a great programmer—although

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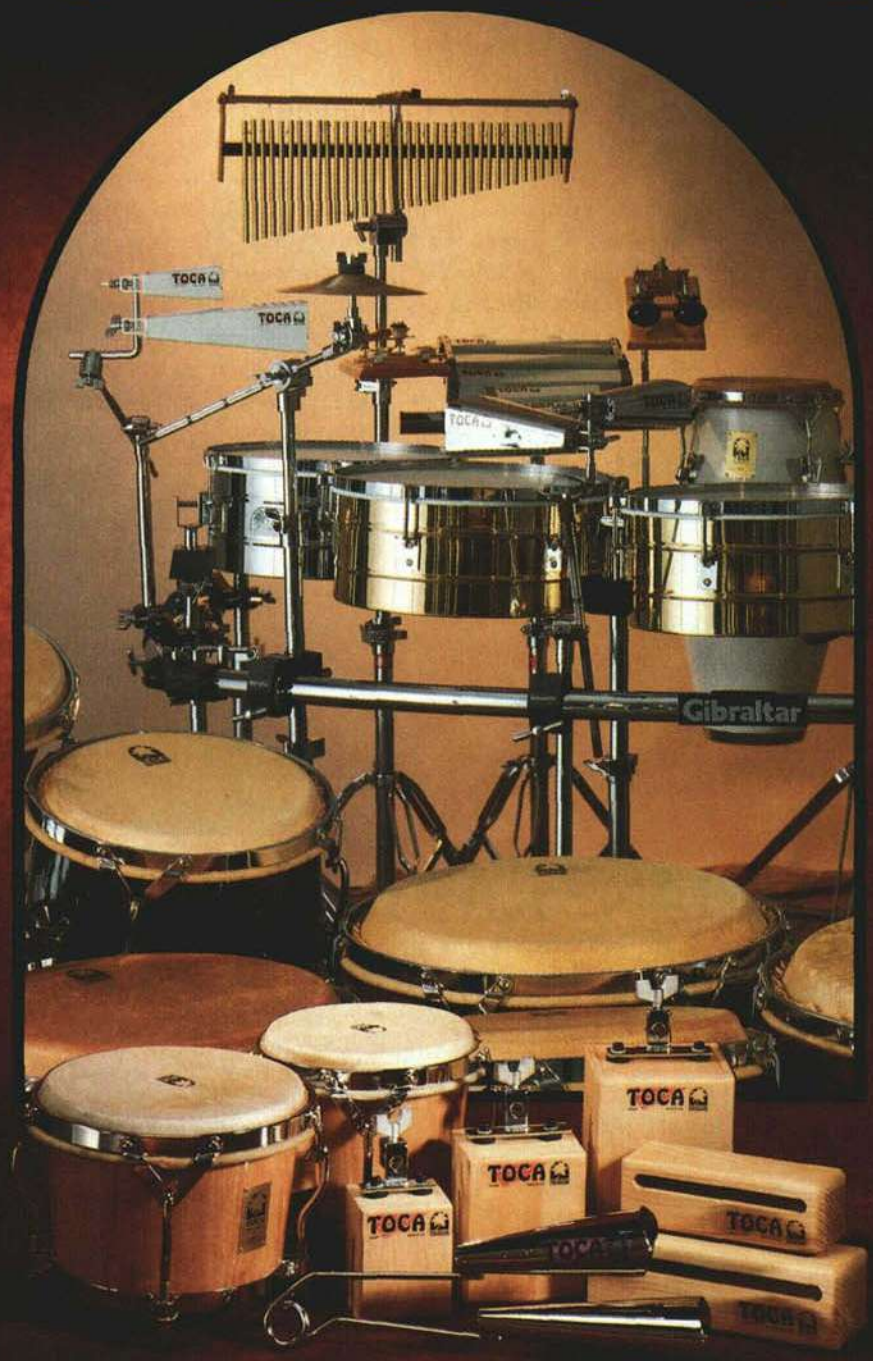

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that is important also. Chops belong in the butcher shop. They're important for furthering your potential to be innovative, but the bottom line is feel. It's just something you have intuitively that you have to try to cultivate."

After Perry's solo LP, Journey began to cut their final album, *Raised On Radio.* Perry, who was in the driver's seat as producer, hired Larrie to play drums. "If you're a drummer, pick up that record and listen to 'Be Good To Yourself and compare that aggressive left hand with 'I'll Be Alright Without You.' It's two different drummers. To find that in one human being is unbelievable."

Larrie spent the last eight years touring with the Everly Brothers. They had first met Larrie in the early '70s, when Chet Atkins had called him to play on an album he was producing on the Everlys called *Pass The Chicken And Listen.* "There were a lot of rhythm changes on that album, and Larrie was superb at that," says Don Everly.

"We did that album in about three days, but there was drumming like you never heard," recalls Phil Everly. "Then I split, and when we had our reunion, we decided we'd like to have Larrie, because he was the best. He was our rock, and we started with him.

"One of the great things that happened in my life was having all those years with Larrie on the road," continues Phil. "He was a great friend. The times I'd be on stage and just a little bit tired, I'd turn around with my back to the audience, and there would be Larrie. I could mug with him, and he'd make me smile, he'd make me laugh, and my energy would come up. And he'd be doing something so spectacular on the drums that it was ridiculous."

"He was extremely sympathetic to other players, even though he was a powerhouse on his own." says guitarist Albert Lee, who toured with Londin with Rosanne Cash, as well as with the Everly Brothers. "He was very much a listener and very cognizant of helping players along. He knew what I required from a drummer, which is a good pounding backbeat. It makes my life a lot easier to play with something really solid. He was the epitome of that—not just in country, but in all kinds of music. I feel fortunate, because a lot of people in Nashville just saw him at a three-hour session, whereas we actually lived together on and off for eight years. He was a great friend."

"I miss him on stage, but I so dearly miss the time I spent with him as a person, the hours talking on the bus," says Don Everly. "You get to know somebody quite well when you have that time going down the highway. You talk about life, and his advice was good. He would always tell you what he thought. And if he didn't like you, he'd tell you that, too," Don laughs. "But he'd tell you he loved you if he did."

"He had one of the biggest hearts I've ever seen," agrees Phil. "So many times, if there was something wrong in life, you'd go to Larrie. What you would get from him was down-home, salt-of-the-earth advice that would help. That's a rarity."

"He was very sentimental," Don says. "Things would touch Larrie and tears would come to his eyes. He was a big baby, but he was also one of the toughest people I knew. He knew karate and had

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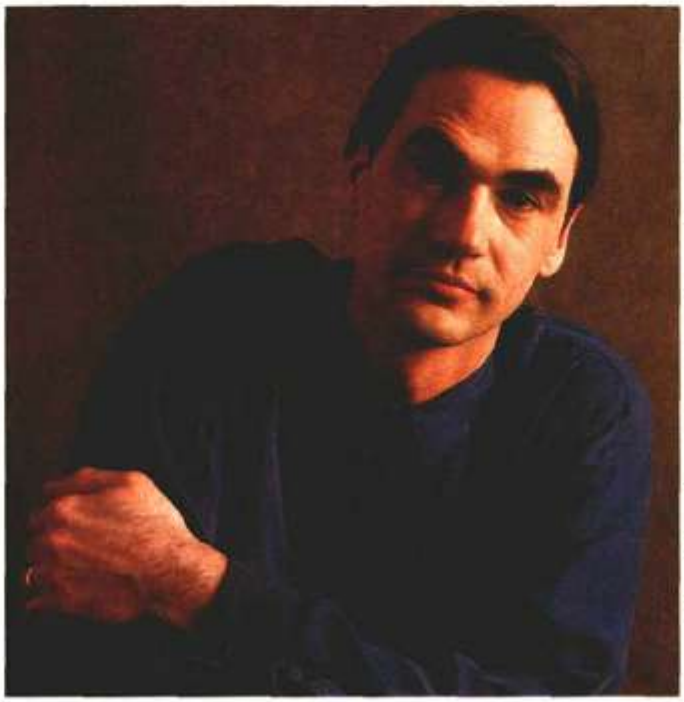

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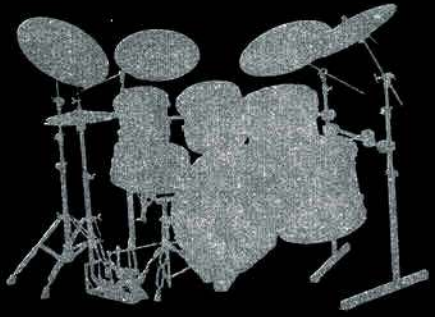

arms and legs like a gorilla, and played louder and harder than anybody."

"Larrie was also very funny. He used to love to tell the story about the night we were all partying in the bar in a hotel, where they had an upright piano," Phil recalls. "The party was kind of losing its zest, so one of the boys was playing the piano and Larrie said he was going to push it into the pool. I thought he was just joking, but I had to pay off a few security people that night. How Larrie pushed it in is beyond me, because you're talking one man! He was always a good time.

"When things get tough, we still say what Larrie would always say: 'Get on with it.' And when Larrie went, that's what we all did," says Phil, sadly. "We all went out and held a wake for him, and if we could have found a piano, we would have dumped it in the pool."

On April 24, 1992, while conducting a clinic at North Texas State, Larrie suffered a fibrilation of the heart. He was rushed to the hospital, but somewhere along the line, he lost oxygen, suffered major brain damage, and went into a state of vegetation. Through his family's love and devotion, Larrie did begin to respond, and reports have it that he began to recognize his friends and family. In fact, he was cognizant enough to have told his wife Debbie that he wanted to reaffirm his wedding vows after thirty years of marriage. But on August 24, 1992, after his most successful day of rehabilitation therapy, his body just shut down. Debbie believes he willed himself to die—that he had come back far enough to realize he would never play again. And Larrie could not live without the music.

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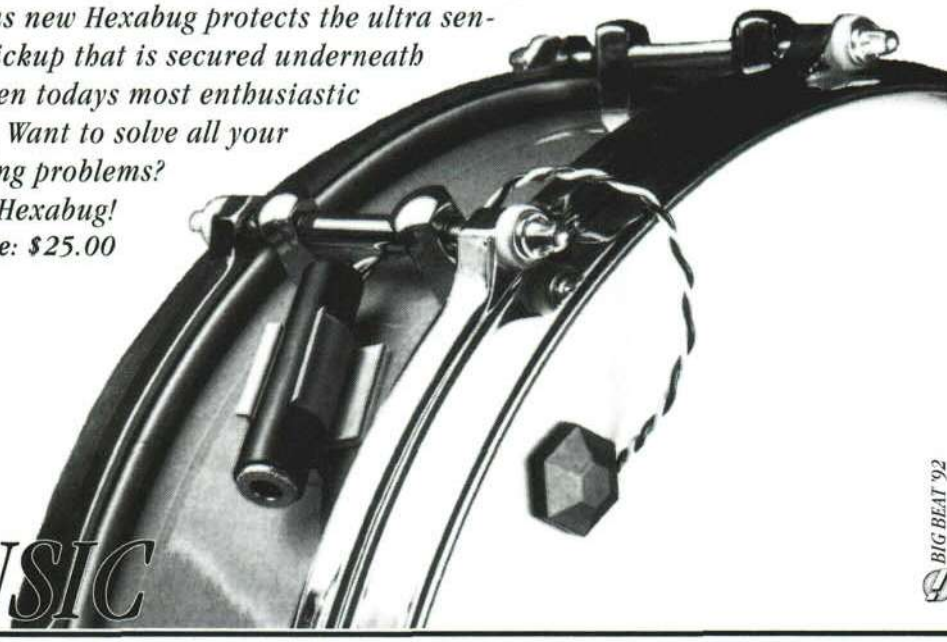

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When Calfskin Was King: Part 2

by Woody Thompson

In our first installment, we discussed the history of calfskin drumheads, and took a look at how these unique heads were manufactured. We also introduced many of the key figures in calfskin-head manufacturing, and learned about the companies that grew into important names within the percussion instrument industry: American Rawhide Manufacturing Corp. (Amrawco), White Eagle Rawhide (Werco), Oremus Rawhide, United Rawhide, and National Rawhide.

But times, taste, and technology all change. And these three forces combined to turn the drumhead industry on its ear by the late 1950s, with the advent of the polyester film drumhead. It was then that a drummer/inventor from Santa Fe, New Mexico named Chick Evans first started sending *Mylar* drumheads out to music stores, and an enterprising young drummer/drumshop owner in Los Angeles named Remo Belli first took note of the enormous potential of this product.

In spite of its many musical attributes, the calfskin head was functionally flawed. Calfskin is a hydroscopic material. That is, it tends to absorb moisture from the air when the air is wet, and return it to the air when the air becomes dry. Thus a calfskin head could become loose, soggy, and often unplayable in wet weather, and could tighten up, sometimes to the point of ripping, in dry weather. Drummers had come to expect this behavior in calfskin and looked on it as almost routine. But there is no doubt that it was a serious problem for some players—particularly marching band drummers and others who were frequently called upon to play out-of-doors.

Other factors encouraged the demise of calfskin drumheads. Popular music was changing during the late 1950s; the swing-based music of the '30s and '40s was being challenged by the harder sounds of rock 'n' roll and R&B. Gradually, the essentially acoustic sound of the swing era was giving way to a more electric sound—and the sound of *Mylar* on a drum, thought to be overly harsh by many calfskin players, was being welcomed by the more aggressive rock 'n' rollers. Drummers were starting to play harder to compete with amplified instruments—and calfskin, though able to hold up quite well under a moderate beating, couldn't take the pounding that rock drummers were starting to give it.

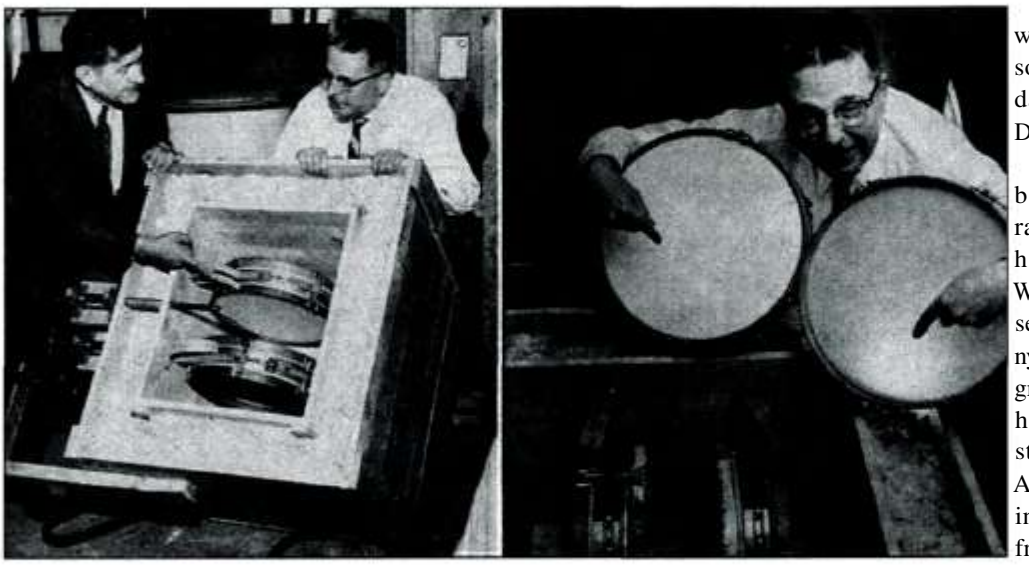
Furthermore, musical instruments were starting to become a major consumer item, feeding the demand of the baby boomers who were starting to play their first instruments—and the drum

Photos courtesy of Sis LaCombe

Before going into the plastic drumhead business, Remo Belli (left, shown with his partner Roy Harte) proudly marketed Amrawco calfskin heads in Belli and Harte's retail drumshop. This photo was taken in the mid-1950s.

makers were streamlining to meet the demand. Although the "Beatle-boom" was still several years away, the stage was being set for a hugely expanded drum market. With *Mylar,* a company like Ludwig could take a vital part of its manufacturing operation in-house again without having to deal with several different independent head companies or worrying about their ability to find enough suitable heads to meet the demand. *Mylar* was also much cheaper than calfskin and, once production was put in place, it was available in limitless quantities. And, of course, in one huge turnaround, the *Mylar* head solved all the weather-related problems that players had faced with the temperamental calfskin heads.

Not that this was the first time a replacement for calfskin had come on the scene. The calfskin head-makers had survived many attempts to unseat calfskin as the pre-eminent material for drumheads. Yet all these attempts had been unsuccessful. So when *Mylar* heads first started showing up, they were not particularly worried. Sis LaCombe, daughter of Howard Emory of Amrawco, remembers her father's reaction to the new synthetic heads: "My dad had a way of saying the word 'plastic' that made it sound like a swear word. Over the years he had seen many different synthetic drumheads, and of course they all failed. So when *Mylar* first came on he said, 'Well, here's another one.' I wish he could have been a Monday morning quarterback." Howard had even joked with Bill Ludwig, Jr. about selling his business when *Mylar* first appeared—a seemingly absurd



In 1958, Amrawco tested the strength of calfskin and plastic drumheads. A special box was created, in which drums fitted with each of the heads were whacked by a motor-driven drumstick at a rate of six beats per second, or 21,600 beats per hour. Interestingly, after nineteen days of testing (and ten million simulated beats), it was the plastic head that broke. Howard Emory, of Amrawco, is pointing to the broken spot (illuminated by a light under the drum) in the photo at right. Amrawco also underwrote extensive acoustical tests between the two head types.

notion, given the fact that at the time he was selling around $30,000 worth of heads a month to the Ludwig company alone.

But through the pioneering efforts of Chick Evans and Bob Beals of Evans Products, Remo Belli and Sam Muchnick of Remo, Inc., and the Ludwigs, by the early 1960s the polyester-film drumhead had become a viable product that drummers everywhere were starting to embrace. It was a particular godsend for marching drummers. John Emory recalls, "The first ones that went to *Mylar*—pretty fast—were the schools and the marching bands, and *that's* where a lot of sales volume is. You don't really have that much volume in professional musicians; it's not enough to carry you. You need the bread and butter of the schools. So we kind of lost out."

As *Mylar* started to take hold of the market, different companies responded in different ways. Some of the original company founders were starting to get on in years, and simply retired from the business. John Oremus, who had started out working for the Ludwig tannery and then had founded his own business in 1930, closed his company. John Surak, whose National Rawhide Co. had been involved in making drumheads and no other rawhide products, went directly into the leather business. His company is still in business today as Surak leather, producing high-quality products.

In some cases, the task of dealing with the *Mylar* revolution was left to the children and grandchildren of the original company founders. At Werco, George Durkovic's son-in-law, John Janac, had taken over the operation—later joined by his two sons. At Amrawco, the Emory brothers, Howard and Munson, were being assisted by Munson's son, John, and later by Howard's daughter, Sis, and her husband, Dick Craft.

Amrawco and Werco were larger businesses and made other rawhide products besides drumheads. John Janac had joined Werco before World War II and had set about diversifying the company. "Plastic heads came in quite gradually," says Judith Janac. "My husband saw it coming, so he started developing new products. And then we went into the importing business, bringing guitars in from Japan and things like that. So that kind of took the place of the skin heads. But *Mylar* did cut into the business; it was a big change."

Today, Judith's son Dick Janac, grandson of George Durkovic, carries on the activities of Werco as part of his larger business, McCormick Enterprises. He is still in the drumhead business to the extent that his company imports skin heads from Southeast Asia.

The success of *Mylar* was perhaps hardest on Amrawco, the largest of the head manufacturers and the most active in trying to maintain a market for calfskin heads. Although the company had traditionally made other rawhide products (artificial limbs, gears and belting for industrial machinery, and even buggy whips), by the late 1950s fully 80% of their business was in drumheads. As more and more players switched to *Mylar,* the effects were felt at Amrawco. "We could see it going down slowly," says John Emory. "Every six months we would notice a drop. Where we used to make three hundred heads a day, by the early '60s we were down to half that. And heads were a big moneymaker, so that really hurt."

Amrawco followed the other companies by increasing their production of other rawhide and leather products. They also attempted to treat calfskin in a way that would eliminate some of the problems inherent in the material. "We tried to waterproof them, using different silicone treatments," remembers John Emory. "We tried coating them and impregnating them but we really weren't successful." According to Sis LaCombe, the addition of waterproofing agents ruined the legendary tone of calfskin.

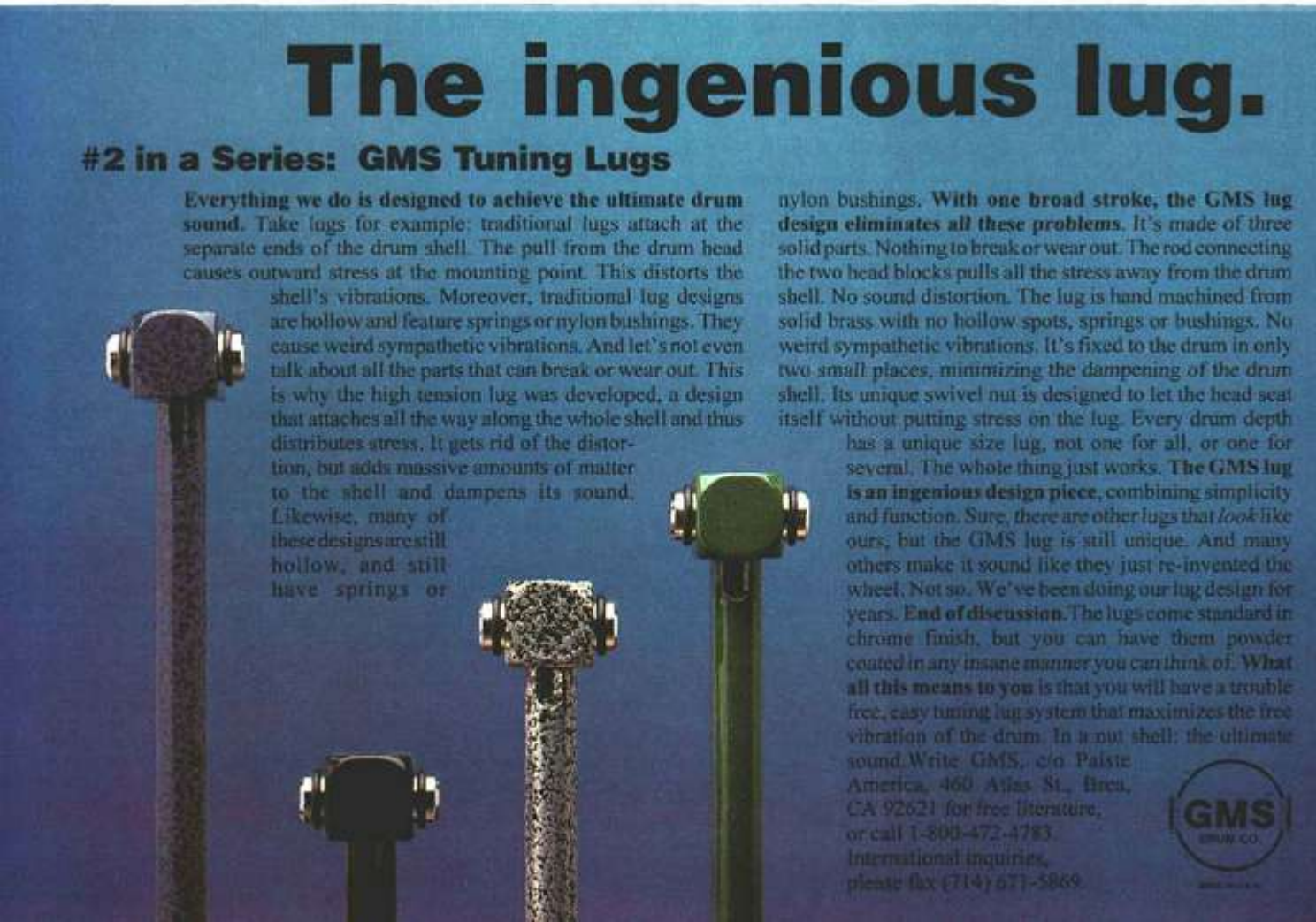
Amrawco even mounted an ad campaign extolling the virtues of natural skin heads. These ads were placed in trade and music magazines, and emphasized the long tradition of calfskin heads and their beautiful, warm tones.

Amrawco also flirted with the idea of going into the *Mylar* head business. "As *Mylar* started coming in, my father and his brother looked at getting into the plastic business—but decided not to," says John Emory. "And of course that was a fatal mistake. We had all the market entry and the name recognition. At one point we had a guy working on a plastic drumhead that would have been under our name—but it was just looking like an awful lot of money to spend. So, although we did make an effort, it wasn't a big effort. At the same time, we watched calf sales go down—while the overhead went up. Pretty soon we weren't making the money we had been, and it got awfully tight."

Howard Emory passed away in 1959, and Munson's health was deteriorating, so John Emory and Howard's son-in-law, Dick Craft, kept the business going in the early '60s. Shortly after his own father died in 1966, John left the business, and Craft and his wife Sis took it over. Sis had inherited her father's great love for music and fondness for musicians. She well remembers Gene Krupa and Buddy Rich at the family breakfast table when she was a child. She and her husband were interested in keeping Amrawco in the drumhead business. The company's large facility on Goose Island in Chicago was sold, and some of the tooling was moved to a smaller building in Lyons, Illinois.

At this point, other factors were beginning to make the manufacture of calfskin heads an ever-more-difficult task. Good quality raw skins were beginning to be in short supply. Sis feels that the use of chemicals and steroids in beef-raising negatively affected the quality of calfhide. Also, calves for the veal market were starting to be shipped out of Chicago with the hide on, leaving fewer skins for the head-makers to choose from. What skins were available were often ruined by sloppy flaying. With a dramatically decreased demand for unmarred skins, the slaughterhouses were paying less attention to the careful removal of calfskin.

By the late '60s, the market for calfskin drumheads had decreased to almost nothing. What demand there was was mostly for timpani heads. Sis and her husband were trying to fill the demand for these heads, but, as she says, "You can't just sell the cream; you've got to sell the milk too." They got into a distributorship for Rogers Drums and kept at head-making to the extent that they would receive partially processed heads from United Rawhide and put them through their own buffing and sorting process—something Amrawco had always done "to perfection." The Crafts were assisted by the skilled hands of calfskin expert Ray Schwartz, an employee who had been with Amrawco for many years. Following the death of Dick Craft in 1969, Sis kept



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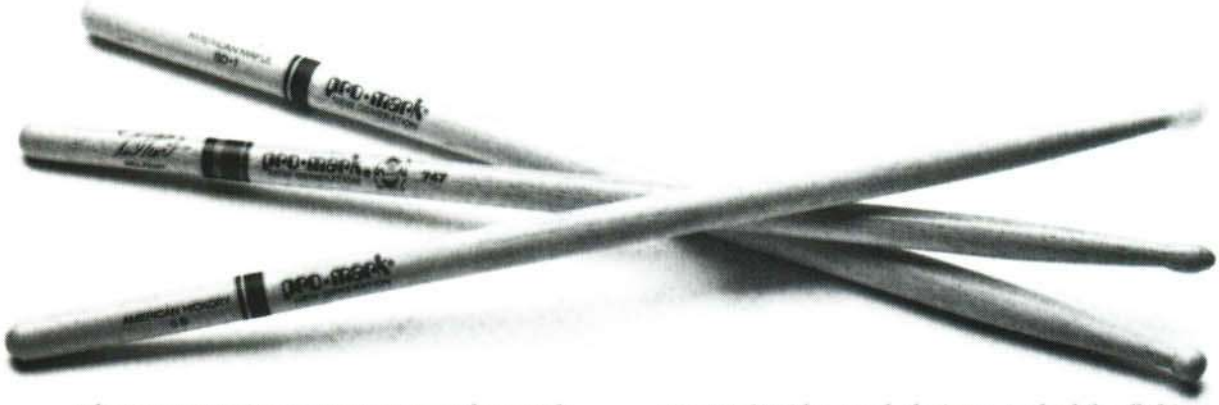

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the company going for a short while. But she soon found that the demands of raising three children prohibited her from handling the company, and American Rawhide was sold at auction in 1969.

This left one company, United Rawhide, still in business. United had been founded in 19S1 by Steve Palansky, an immigrant from Brezova, Czechoslovakia, with a $300 loan. A strongly spiritual man with distinctly old-world sensibilities, Palansky worked very hard to make his product a success in a very competitive market. He was able to establish accounts with each of the major drum companies and distributors as a result of his conscientiousness as a businessman and the high quality of his product. Palansky suffered the same reversal of fortune in the early '60s that the other companies experienced, and diversified his product line in order to keep in business. But he had founded the company as a head-making enterprise, and he was determined to keep making calfskin heads—however limited the market might be. Today, his company continues to offer a complete line of handcrafted heads for both drums and percussion instruments. Although there are other domestic makers of skin heads for various ethnic drums, Palansky is apparently the last U.S. maker of calfskin heads for orchestral drums, drumsets, and timpani.

In Part 3 of this series, we'll take a look at some of the drummers still using calfskin heads today—and their reasons for doing so. We'll also examine the future of these unique heads.

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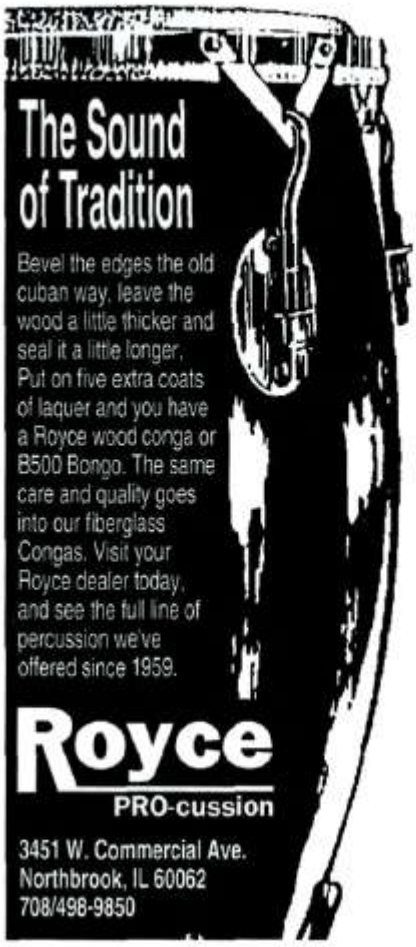

continued from page 31

up playing with Perry again?

SP: Not really, because every time Perry and I played, I always felt something really strong with him. It's a love for music that we both share. We both loved playing live, which was the best part about being on tour—that hour on stage. But we both liked making records, too. We had that in common. Dave [Navarro, guitarist] and Eric [A., bassist] loved music, but they didn't want to do it as much as I did. We all had a good time on stage, but everything that led to getting to that point each day was a mess. They didn't love the whole ordeal. They loved that one hour on stage, but they didn't like the other twenty-three hours.

MP: Dave said in a *Rolling Stone* article that drugs had a lot to do with it.

SP: Yeah, that's true—not so much that anybody's *doing* drugs was a problem itself, but it changed the people involved and made them negative. It got to the point where they were more concerned with where they were going to get their next score than with the gig that night. Then on stage, I kind of felt like I was the glue holding it all together; everybody was looking at me for direction. And I didn't mind that, but the circumstances of it weren't good. The audience couldn't tell there was a problem, but the four of us could.

MP: But Jane's Addiction wasn't always like that. When did these problems start?

SP: After writing all our songs and making our records, we got stuck on a major tour. It seemed like eight to ten months solid, where we were always with the band, always on a bus—showering with the band, eating with the band, and sleeping with the band. It became unnatural. Now with Porno, I can't wait until the guys get into town so we can just hang out or go swimming or whatever. I'll call to see if they've checked into their hotel yet. It's like a new girlfriend: "Let's go to the zoo, let's go anywhere!" With Jane's, we already *did* everything. We went to Australia, we went here, we went there. Going back into the studio with Jane's just didn't feel right.

MP: What's the difference between Porno at this point and Jane's at the

same point in its career?

SP: Perry and I know so much more about making music and making records, keeping the band together and doing the things you need to do to make it all work. We're just more mature as people and we've brought that to the other guys in Porno. The other three guys in the band see us and think we know what we're doing, whether we really do or not. [laughs] We were all just so young when Jane's started, and, as for the music, it was "three...four...crash!" Everything would be a blow-up, all you could put into it. Porno likes to stretch things out, pull back a little and then climax—maybe. Jane's was getting to that point with the third record; the music was very dynamic and soft in a lot of places. So Perry and I have kind of brought that over into Porno.

MP: What did you do with your time between bands?

SP: Perry and I were talking in Australia, when we knew Jane's was dissolving. We had some good ideas and we just took our time with them. I joined the Infectious thing when I got out of Jane's, mainly because I felt I just had to keep playing. I was home and I didn't know what else I was going to do at the time. But Mike Muir called me up and said he had a tour with Ozzy Osbourne lined up for a month and asked if I'd do it—40-minute shows, done by 9:00 P.M. I'd met Mike from some shows Suicidal Tendencies had done with us, so it sounded like a quick thrill where I could keep my chops up. And I met a lot of cool metal players, like the guys from Metallica and Queensryche. I did percussion on the whole Infectious record and played three songs on drums, but it was just a thing to do for fun while Perry was relaxing. Perry was putting the finishing

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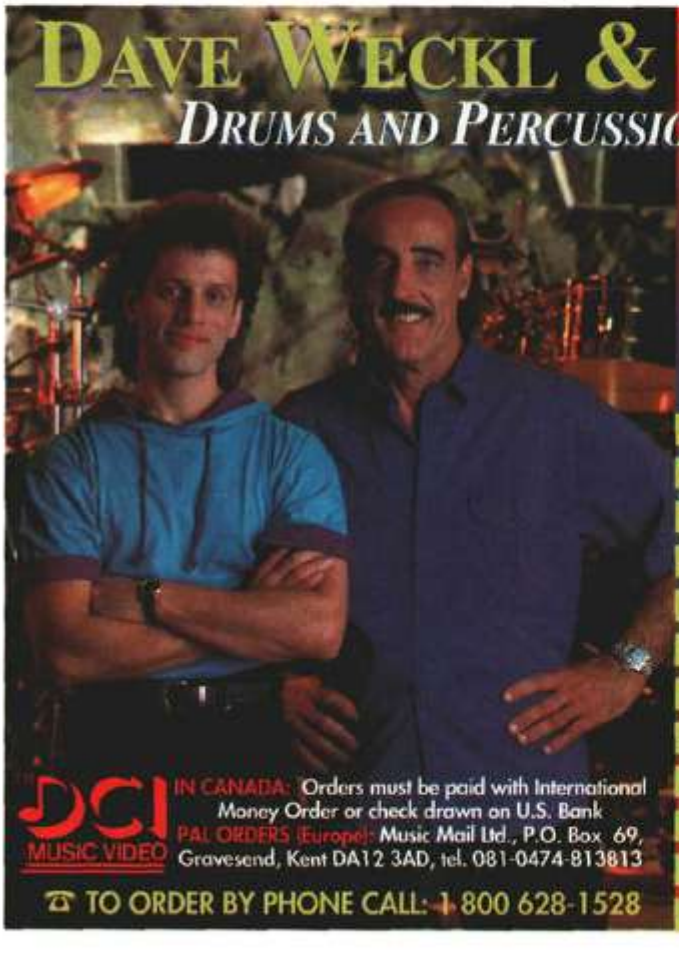
touches on his movie, *Gift,* and we knew we'd get back together for something serious later on. When we finally did, we both had a lot of ideas, plus there were so many songs that were in the air from the Jane's days that we never really worked out. We fooled around with them at rehearsals, but the interest of all four members wasn't there to just dig in and make these parts amazing, like the other Jane's songs. Perry and I decided we'd pull those songs aside and just wait for our next project.

MP: How did you find the other players for Porno?

SP: That was a pretty tough one. The guitar player, a guy named Peter DeSteffano, turned out to be a surfer buddy of Perry. They'd been surfing together for years, and Perry never even knew he played guitar! Meanwhile, we'd been auditioning guitar player after guitar player, and we met a lot of good players. But one day Peter picked up an acoustic and was just shredding, so Perry was like, "I think we found our guitar player, who just happens to be my best surfer buddy!" And then we put an ad out in the *LA. Weekly* for a bass player and got hundreds of calls on it. One night, we did an audition of about thirty guys, and the last one was a guy named Martyn Lenoble, who we ended up asking into the band. He's a really clever player from Amsterdam. European players have a little different approach than American rock 'n' rollers, so I found myself really listening to what he was doing and trying to play along with it. The thing about his parts is that they're not overwhelming or something that will take over the song. Perry, Peter, and I are more thrashers, whereas Mark is very controlled, and I had to learn how to take my thrash into his channel.

MP: Do you and Mark try to lock in with each other or play



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more off each other?

SP: There's some of both, depending on the part of a song. There are some parts where there are sparse, easy guitar strums with busy drums, like this song. *[Stephen plays a taped cut of the song "Porno For Pyros."]* I'm using my bongos a lot as part of the basic rhythm.

MP: You did the same type of thing with Jane's, but now it seems like you're more in the pocket with it.

SP: Well, I did do that with Jane's, but now I think I'm a lot better at it. With Jane's, I'd do that, but then I'd lose my focus on where I was. Like on "Mountain Song," where it's all toms—it was great if I just did that over and over. But if I thought of some weird fill, I'd lose the rhythm and it screwed things up.

MP: I think most drummers would be like that, though.

SP: Yeah, but with Jane's, I would be *willing* to screw things up. [laughs] I was young and didn't care. With Porno, I'm just concentrating more. I've got one crash cymbal, a couple of drums, and that's all I need. I just want to play the part and not fade off into something else.

MP: What made you get more disciplined?

SP: I just felt I was gradually moving to that point as a player anyway. I was listening to some of the old tapes and I was thinking, "Wow, the drums are great, but they're going off too much." It wasn't in a bad way, but now that I'm getting older, I'm finding more pleasure in keeping to the beat. It can still get very complicated and intricate, but I just want to do it over and over and lock it in right. Like I said before, with Jane's, it was, "Three... Four...everybody explode!" We just wanted to put it in everybody's faces. With Porno, we already know we can do that, so we're just holding it back a little and only letting it go once in a while, like a rubber band. And I love playing like that. I feel more in control; I guess the word would be "sexier." I know what I'm doing, I'm here to do it, and I'm not going to screw around with it. I loved Jane's and the busyness of the music, but it's time to go in a different direction.

MP: How do you think that will translate to people familiar with your previous work?

SP: Musicians will listen and get it, but I

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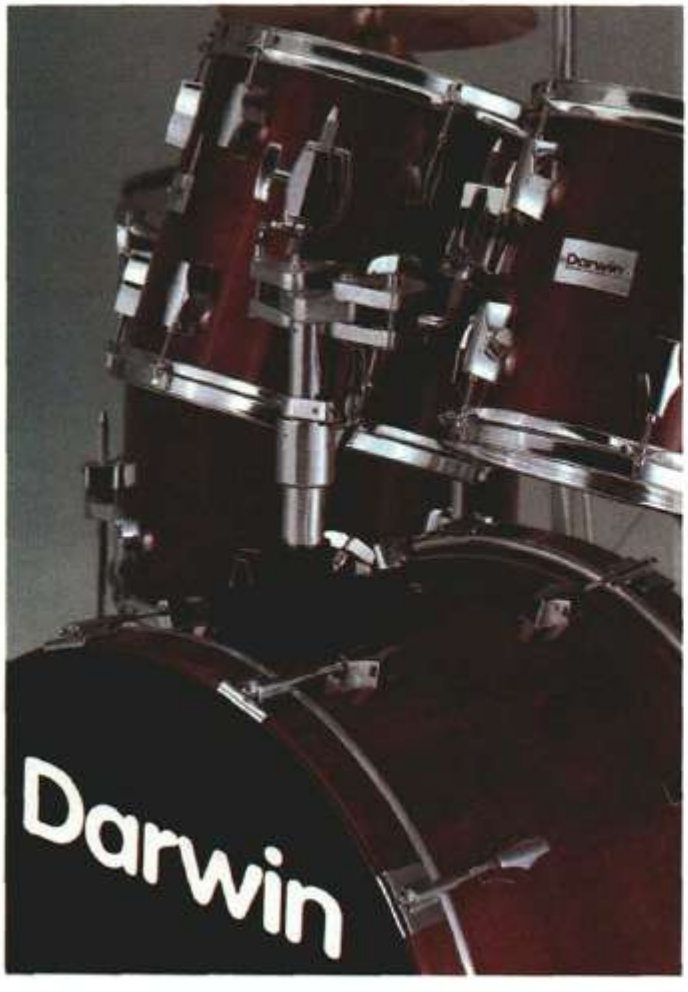
don't really play for anybody else except the other four guys. Like when I see Perry singing, I tell myself I have to be the baddest drummer—because that guy's the baddest singer, and I *gotta* make him happy. But I think people will have to listen to it a few times before they really understand it and see it for what it really is. And that's the kind of music I like, where you have to listen to it before you really get into it. Like when I first heard Pink Floyd or Zeppelin, it was kind of weird at first and I didn't know if I liked it, but then I started to *understand* it. With Bon Jovi, anybody can get it on the first listen. I'd say our stuff is a little more intellectual and that you have to think about it. It's complicated in a subtle way.

MP: From what I've heard from Porno so far, the songs actually seem a little more structured than Jane's songs were, which lends more accessibility to them.

SP: "Structured" is a good word. Perry and I have gotten to the point where we're slicing off all the fat. Let's get trim and make the song. We thought, "This is just bass, drums, guitar, and vocals. Should we produce it?" But why? If it's a good song, let people hear it as it is. With Jane's, the songs were great, but we were new in the studio and tried to tinker with little toys to spice things up. But Porno is bare bones, just the five musicians and that's it.

MP: Is it easy to create songs with the new group?

SP: The songs are coming very easily. It does take work, though, to make some of the complicated parts sound the way we heard them in our heads. But it's such a positive attitude that it just went by really quickly, and now that we're done recording this record, we're going to put it away and start writ-



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ing for a new record, even before the first one's out. We want to write more songs because they're in us. We don't want to just tour on these tunes. We love writing songs and recording them. I don't like the idea that a band like Metallica makes one record every five years. I mean, I love Metallica; I bow down to them. But I gotta create more than ten songs every three years. Jane's only did thirty songs in six years. And all the Jane's tunes were written at the same time, which made things even worse.

MP: But then you run into the danger of all your songs sounding the same. Over a couple of years, your style is bound to change.

SP: That's true, but each song with us sounds so different. That's the way it was with Jane's. You couldn't tell they were written at the same time, but they were. "Three Days," which is a ten-minute tune, might have been written on the same day as "Had A Dad," a three-minute song on a different album. But we definitely want all the songs to sound different.

MP: I'm sure it helps to have a kit like yours. Where did you get the idea to make bongos and timbales important parts of your set?

SP: I grew up playing to AC/DC, and I love it, but nobody ever taught me how to play Latin music, which is what real percussion is. Now I'm discovering you don't need the kick and snare to make meter. You can imply the meter and play other drums. For cymbals, all I have is a crash, a ride, a China, and a couple of ice bells. I had a zillion cymbals with Jane's, but now I'm forced to hit them only when I need to. Cymbals interrupt and blend into guitar frequencies, so I told myself that instead of doing a hi-hat beat, do it on the toms or timbales, make it more drummy or percussive and less like a trapkit. I was teaching my sister's friend how to play drums, and instead of the normal kick-snare things, I taught her a Latin beat first. And now she's onto this new vibe and it's awesome! I was taught the conventional way first, and I don't mind playing it like that. But that's what everybody else is doing; it's already been done. So I'm having to teach myself new things. I'm looking now into having this guy make me a customized African drum to take the place of my bass drum.

MP: Who has given you guidance in this direction?

SP: Just other band members and Perry, mainly. Perry's a great drummer. Technically, he can't shred, but he can get back there and think of some crazy beat that you or I would never think of. A lot of people don't realize that Stevie Wonder played drums on a lot of his old records, and he came up with some groovy beats. The guy's a keyboard player, he wasn't taught kick/snare, he was just taught music. A couple of our songs don't have very much melody with the guitar or bass, so it's up to me to use toms, bongos, and timbales to make up a melody line. Instead of just rolling down the toms for a fill, I try to use them as part of a song. And I just bought a timpani that I set up to my left, and I'm tuning it to the song. That takes a little more work, but it's a fun drum. I'm just trying to approach it all like a new instrument, and it challenges me to come up with something new. And the guys in the band pull that out of me.

I've been getting into Airto. He doesn't have a drumkit, he has a percussion kit and plays music by himself. That's something I'm trying to do and something I think real drummers can pull off. I love Metallica and bands like that. I like playing to their records; I get off on that. But when I'm making my own parts, I want to go beyond that and make it my own thing, my own character. I want people to know that it sounds like Stephen Perkins.

MP: Does that individuality drive you to be publicly recognized for your work?

SP: Not to be known as Stephen Perkins, but known as a drum *sound.* Not the tone of it, but the feel of it. Like the song "Infectious Grooves," I wanted to do something funky to it. The demo they sent me was all right, but pretty straight. But I said, "Why do you have to have the snare on 2 and 4? Put it somewhere else and just make people *think* it's on 2 and 4. Screw with it a little. That, to me, is my character. I don't want to be known for just a sound; I want people to listen to me and think, "Wow, that's a musical drummer." If you take the bass, guitar, and vocals away and leave just the drum part, I still want it to be musical and have melody.

MP: It sounds like one thing hasn't changed, in that you and Perry get bored easily with what you've created.

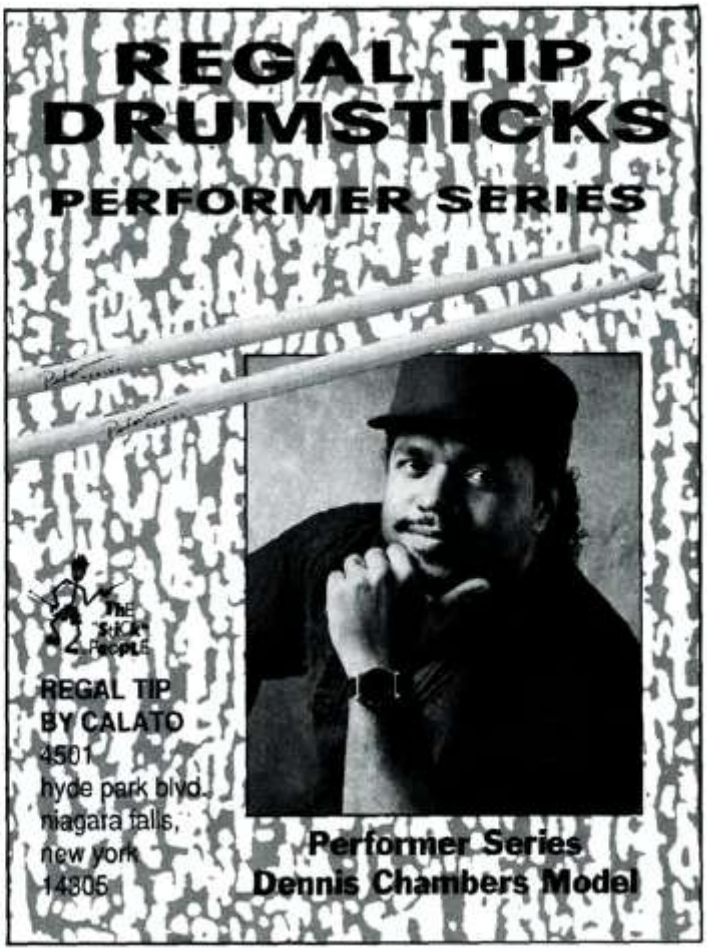
SP: It's just that we want to keep creating. And I see Porno as evolving constantly. We're thinking of things all the time, like putting a marimba on my kit. Then I'd *really* be able to play a melody. Kick, snare with one hand, and melody with the other hand. It might be hard, impossible maybe [laughs], but why have a floor tom and not have something that plays actual melodies?

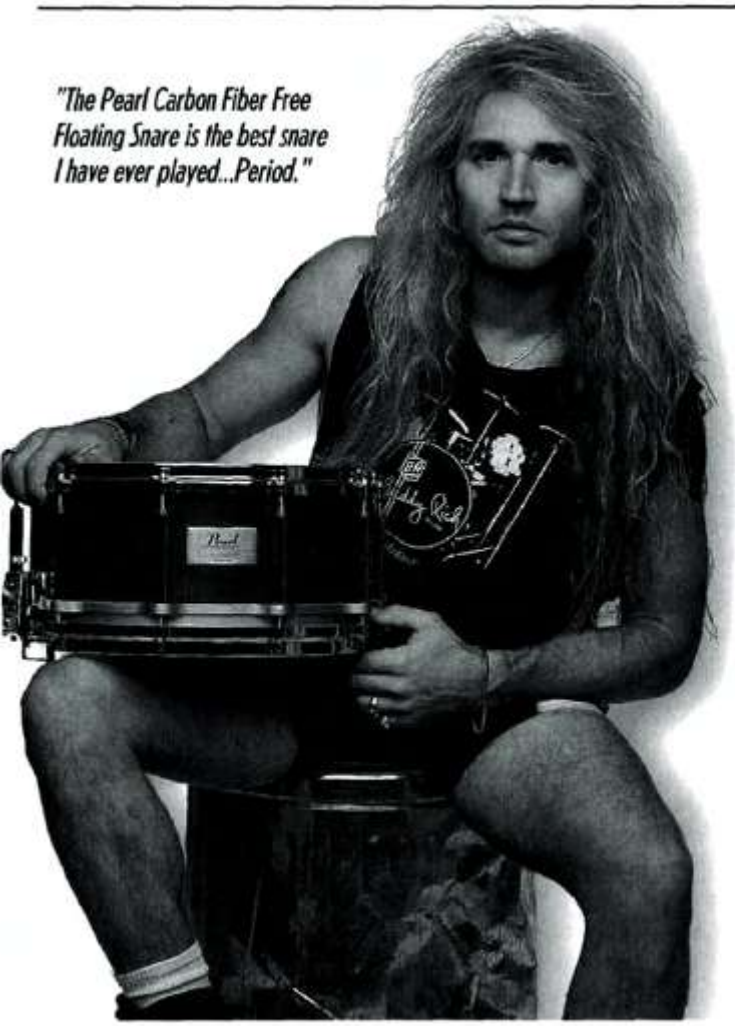
I want to get to the point where I can make music completely with my kit. I've looked into electronics and I bought a couple of Roland pads. I use them once in a while, but I never want to use them for a drum sound. Why put a snare in a pad when you've already got a snare? I find that pads are good for practicing and good for the studio if you want to come up with a weird sound or noise. But I want to hear real drums, and it hurts me to hear samples.

MP: Aside from the percussion instruments, is there anything else that's unconventional about your setup?

SP: Well, I guess you could say the position of my snare is different. I tilt it forward now because for five or six years, I used to get bruises on my leg from it being in the wrong position for me. I ended up moving it around until I found the place that was most comfortable, and that turned out to be tilting it forward. And I crank the snare tension on it really tight. By itself, it sounds obnoxious, but with the whole kit and the rest of the music, it fits right in there.

MP: Are you very particular about the exact notes or sounds





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SP: I'm very much into tuning my drums correctly and getting a good sound straight from that and going with it. Engineers usually hate me because I don't put anything in my kick drum, just the two heads. It's loud, but if you tune the heads right, it only rings as much as a floor tom would. When I bought my first drumset, all it came with was the two heads and a felt strip, so I learned to tune it like that. An engineer might want me to at least put a pillow in there, but then you have these nice, resonant toms and a "thud" for a kick. Then the biggest drum is the softest instrument. It doesn't make any sense. I'll tell an engineer, "Why don't you just put a microphone in front of the head, let me tune it, and if it sounds good on stage, but not in the speakers, tell me what you need me to do—whether it's too ringy, too dead—and I'll tune it." That, to me, is the way you should make music. But you get to the point where engineers say, "We could use an electronic kit and it'll sound just as good, Steve. We could plug it in—no tuning." But that hurts me. I feel like the drum is there for a drum reason. If you know how to tune a floor tom or kick drum, tune it. People are taping and muffling because they can't get the overtones out of drums. But you're the drummer, you should know what you want to hear, so learn how to tune your drums. I'll spend an hour, sweating, frustrated over it, only to find out one of the heads is busted! But I'll just get a new head and work it out. And I never like the feel of hitting a drum with something in it, like there's something in the way. That's why with Porno, we got our keyboard player/sound effects guy [Matt Hyde], who's also an engineer, to do the engineering for the record. He's on our side, and he knows the songs, so when you hear the kick drum, it's big. But it's a 16x20, so it's not much bigger than a floor tom, and by tuning it right, you don't get any ring.

MP: Is it hard to be musical as a drummer, in the way you're speaking of, and not get in the way of what the other players are doing?

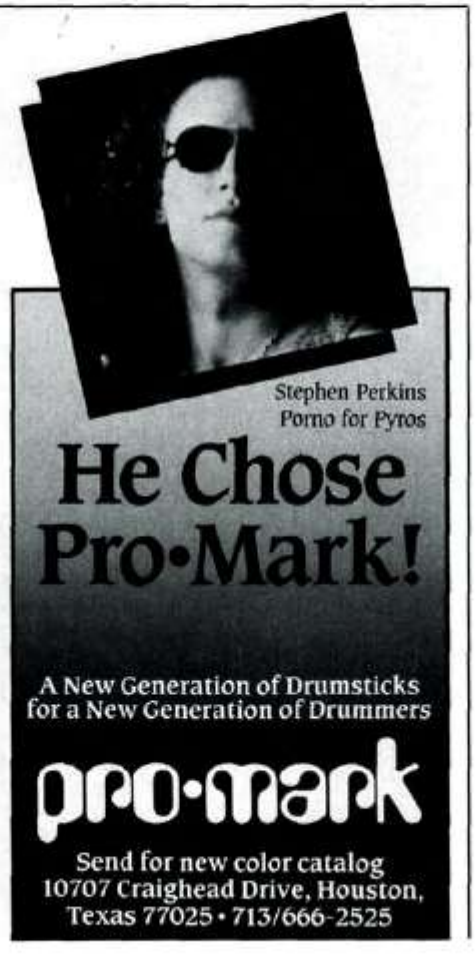
SP: There's a fine line, when you have to ask if it's working. Ask the bass player if it's working with a cool tom-tom thing you might be doing. It takes a lot of work and good communication, but we've got it down, or at least we're getting better at it. For instance, we did ten songs in the studio and we were kind of bored, so we wrote another one right on the spot, called "Venice." So it was like, "Wow, we're really starting to figure each other out." It's fun because we are learning about each other every day and we're coming up with new ideas all the time. We haven't played live very much at this point, and it seems like all the cool parts we've worked on in rehearsal just go out the window when we play a show. But that's cool, too, because we're making things up on the spot and pulling them off. When there's 3,000 fans screaming, it makes you do weird things sometimes. But then when you listen back to the tapes, you realize how cool it sounds and that you have a new part to play.

MP: Do you record yourself and listen back often?

SP: I'm the tape master! Especially with the drums, I like to go back and listen. I don't want to settle, even with the parts I've put on record. I listen to the Jane's stuff and I think there are some parts I could have played better, and it feels good to get better. I started getting into recording our shows in the early Jane's days. Perry would always do something different or say something weird in a monologue every night, and it was like, "Wow, this is never going to be said again." And the guitar solos and drum solos were different every night, so I'd take the tape and pop it in after the show and pick up on those things. But I also use the tape as a reference point. I'll go back to shows from a few months or a year ago and see how I've changed. I have a room full of Jane's, Porno, and Infectious tapes. To me, the music I make is my whole life, and it's worth saving.

MP: Listening back to your tapes, how do you think your playing has changed?

SP: I've just become more aware of other players in the band. When the singer's singing, support him, don't show off. Sometimes I'd forget he was singing and I'd think of something bad-ass to play. But people want to hear what someone's singing and they don't want to hear a drummer going off at the same time.



When it's my turn to take off, I'll do it. And reading the lyrics helps me do that better. If there's a sad verse, I'll play it a little differently than I did the last verse. That's important to me. Lyrics may not mean much to a lot of people, but Perry's lyrics truly mean a lot to me, and I have to support him. That's what makes this band; it's more like an ensemble.

This band challenges me to be a better player technically. With the bongos, toms, and snare going back and forth, it takes a lot more concentration to keep these intricate parts going. Some of the parts call for something jazzy, so I put pressure on myself to make them jazzy every time, because I know I can do it. So I press myself to loosen up, so I can pull off things—like a seven-stroke roll—when I need to.

This new band has forced me to become more interested in the *consistency* of what I'm playing. There's a Porno song called "Cursed Female," where I did something I don't think I've ever done before, where I just play solid groove the whole time. The song needed a big drum beat that you didn't have to keep thinking about. It needed to be constant, hypnotizing—a beat to me that just feels like sex.

MP: Do you practice your parts a lot on your own?

SP: Not the parts so much, but I definitely play every day. I've got a little kit set up in my house, and I really get off on playing; I *have* to play. I'd rather be sitting behind my set than doing anything else at home. Sitting outside in the sun, reading a book, or watching a good movie is all right, but creating music is just so much more exciting to me. Sometimes I'm not motivated or inspired to come up with anything special, so I just work on my chops or on something syncopated, and then I start to loosen up and get inspired again. I feel blessed that I made enough money with Jane's to soundproof a room so I can play twenty-four hours a day if I want to. It's strange, because the first few weeks after doing that, I'd play for hours upon hours a day. As the weeks went by I didn't play as much, but I feel so comfortable behind my kit that I still go in there and sit on my throne just to eat dinner; I'd put my dinner right on my snare. So even when nothing's coming out of me that day or I'm just suckin', I still like to be back there and *thinking* about drumming. Even before a gig, I'm thinking about it and trying to focus; and that, to me, is practicing. If you lose that discipline, once you get behind a kit, you're just playing on image and you're not facing yourself. And if I don't pull something off one night that I know I should, damn if I'm not going to pull it off tomorrow. I don't do it just to make myself happy, but to make the song better. But still, it's something inside me that wants to do it right. And I get the same feeling playing drums in my bedroom as I did when Jane's sold out Madison Square Garden, which was amazing. I mean, I had 20,000 kids hearing my kick drum. But the feeling is still the same when I'm the only one hearing it.

MP: But how important is it for you to play in front of that many people? Jane's reached a level of popularity that Porno might never hit.

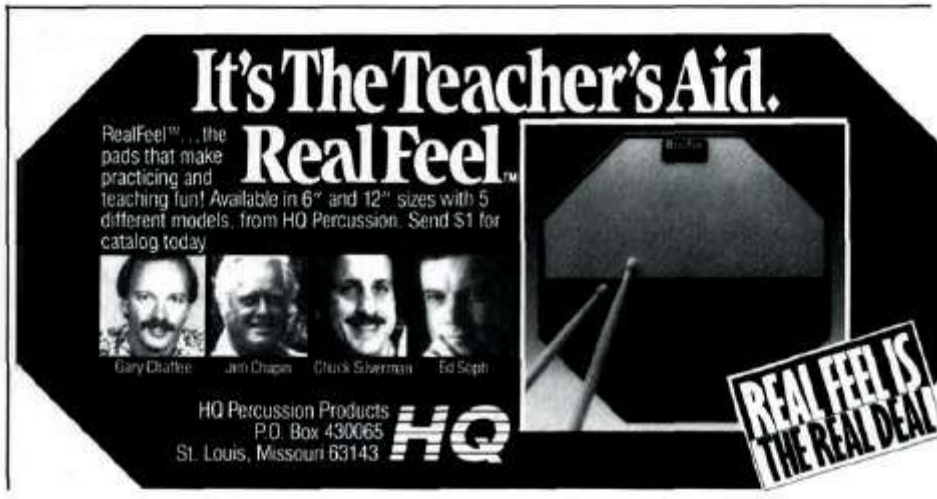
SP: It's fun to have 20,000 fans out there, don't get me wrong. But it's more important to make good music. We could have made another Jane's record and played in front of 50,000 people at our next gig, but inside it wouldn't have felt right. It would be, "Dudes, we just fooled 50,000 people tonight."

MP: Your new band is kind of in an enviable position of being able to make its own rules. You can make records whenever you want and do isolated shows whenever you want, without the drudgery of six or twelve months straight on the road.

SP: You've hit the spot right there; that's exactly what the plan is, to stay away from the conventional tour. Everybody goes to The Ritz to see a band, and we say, "Screw that, we're going to do something else." We just want to find a cool space in a city, like a park, rent it for the day, and throw a party. Just a good outdoor vibe. We don't want it to be the same old thing, a show at The Roxy, five bucks for parking.... We want to make it a day, like the Lollapalooza atmosphere, except with just us and maybe some side act—and not even a rock 'n' roll band, but maybe a mariachi band.

MP: And what about you personally? Where do you see yourself in the future?

SP: Just playing drums and making music; that's where I'm happiest. I'm not sure where I'm headed or who it will be with. You know, the music with Jane's Addiction was such a great part of my life, and I'll listen to those records and love them forever, but now I'm doing something new. There's a new saying we have in the band—instead of "So far, so good," it's "So far, so great." Jane's was great, and this is greater. You can question how long it will last, and Perry and I asked ourselves how many records we could make with Porno—two, five, ten? But we said, "Hey, we're ready to make some more music, so why even question it? Let's just go back to my house and write more songs." Maybe it'll be our last batch, maybe it won't. But if you keep thinking, "Oh, man, we have to go make more records," that's when your thinking is off. I sacrifice a lot of things for music, like deep relationships. But the way I look at it is that *somebody* has to sacrifice to play drums ten hours a day, so it might as well be me.



Chris Layton: Texas Flood

by Robert Santelli

Stevie Ray Vaughan and his band, Double Trouble, played a major role in the resurrection of the blues in the 1980s. While rock 'n' *roll was still in the midst of its post-punk hangover and rap was not yet the powerful musical force it would become by decade's end, Vaughan, bass player Tommy Shannon, and drummer Chris Layton cut a blues path that Robert Cray, Albert Collins, and the entire contemporary blues roster of Alligator Records would ultimately follow—thus returning blues to the position of prominence in pop it had last enjoyed in the late '60s.*

The album that started it all for Vaughan and Double Trouble—Texas Flood—*was certainly one of the most important blues albums of the '80s. Listen to any of its tracks, and you'll hear a band that was innocently loose—almost to a point of being downright cocky. They were also amazingly tight. That Layton supplied the foundation from which Vaughan was able to launch his now legendary guitar solos is plainly evident on songs such as "Pride And Joy," "I'm Cryin'," "Lovestruck Baby," and "Lenny."*

It's also easy to see why, soon after the tracks that would comprise Texas Flood *were cut, Vaughan and Double Trouble were offered a recording contract from pop's great talent scout, John Hammond. Hammond signed the band to the Epic label and kept the recorded contents of the album practically intact.*

RS: I recall reading that *Texas Flood* was recorded in a matter of days.

CL: That's true, it was. We did it over the Thanksgiving holiday in 1982. Jackson Browne had offered us the use of his studio out in California for free. The first day we cut only a couple of songs, but the next day we cut about eight tracks. The album was recorded live. Two days and we were done.

RS: Were the songs that you recorded part of your live repertoire at the time?

CL: Yeah. They say your first record is always the easiest one to make. The reason why that's true is because if you've been a working band, like we were, you just go into the studio and crank out the songs. That's what happened with us. The second record we did *[Couldn't Stand The Weather]* was far more difficult to finish, by comparison.

RS: Who was the engineer for the sessions?

CL: It was Richard Mullen. He was real helpful. I didn't have any real knowledge of how to mike the drums or anything, so he kind of set things up for me. I mean, about the only time I had spent in a recording studio prior to that session was to do a couple of demos back in Texas.

RS: How long had Double Trouble been together prior to recording *Texas Flood*?

CL: I joined Stevie on September 1, 1978. Tommy Shannon joined the band in 1981.

RS: Did the band have any recording experience before cutting *Texas Flood*?

CL: Not as a band. As I said, I had a little experience, but not much. But Stevie had cut various demos and whatnot. Tommy Shannon had recorded with Johnny Winter in the late '60s, and with other artists afterwards. But we'd done nothing as a unit. You have to understand that we didn't go into the studio thinking we were making an album. We didn't have a record deal at the time. We figured we'd just lay down some tracks and see how it sounded. I didn't think, "Well, today we're gonna make our first album." We tuned up the guitars and drums as best we could and just started playing. In a way, it was like your classic '50s style of recording: Get into the studio and let it fly.

RS: How much control did you have over what you played? Did Stevie leave the drum parts of the songs entirely up to you?

CL: Stevie really wasn't the kind of person who would tell you what to play. Sometimes he would suggest a feeling that he thought might work. His whole way of communicating was like, "Hey, maybe when we get into the solo you could drop a bomb on us, you know—lay into the kick drum for one beat." That's about as graphic as he'd get.

RS: Today, when you listen to your performance on *Texas Flood,* are you happy with what you hear?

CL: Well, to be honest, I wish I could have been a better drummer at the time.

RS: Why do you say that?

CL: Oh, I don't know. I listen to *Texas Flood* and the other albums we did, and suddenly it comes to me that we'll never be able to do anything else again. I just wish I'd been better when the opportunity was there. I don't know if this is a normal emotional reaction or not, given what happened to us. I mean, I can ask myself, is this my emotions coming out, or is this an honest critique of my playing? I don't know the answer to that. *Texas Flood* was a good representation of who we were back then. But I think that every record has something to offer that

other records don't. I don't think, in this case, I could come up with a "best album we ever did" kind of judgement. As for Stevie, I think he got some of his best guitar tones on *Soul To Soul.* But I don't think that record is anywhere near what we accomplished on, say, *In Step.* I think the band was really happening on that record, which only made the tragedy of Stevie's death even harder to take. I mean everybody had gotten all cleaned up and sober. When we made *In Step,* it was like making our first record all over again—except this time we had a lot more experience under our belts. Stevie was pretty frightened about making that record. He had real questions about whether or not somebody could be truly creative being totally straight and sober. He was worried about whether or not we'd have that certain edginess. I think he thought after some musicians became sober, they stopped playing—*really* playing, if you know what I mean. He was definitely fearful that it might happen to him. I don't think it did.

"Stevie never liked to do anything the same way twice. We tried to make everything as spontaneous as we could get it."

RS: Is your background pure blues?

CL: I never really played blues before I began playing with Stevie. In my late teens, I was listening to drummers like Billy Cobham and groups like Return To Forever. Earlier than that I was listening to a lot of Santana and Stevie Wonder. Of course, I heard what I *figured* was blues on my mother's Ray Charles records. Also, my dad had a bunch of 78s—things by Lionel Hampton and Count Basie and Fats Waller. That's why, when I first heard B.B. King and Muddy Waters, I just kind of fell right in with that whole blues feeling.

RS: Let's talk for a moment about specific songs off *Texas Flood.* Do you have a favorite track or one that you're most proudof?

CL: I think two of them come to mind: "I'm Cryin'" and "Love Struck Baby." I like what I played on those two tracks the best. "I'm Cryin'" is a good example of how I play a shuffle. As far as I'm concerned, a shuffle is primarily a feel thing. Good "feel" drummers can usually play good shuffles.

RS: What you played on "I'm Cryin'" is quite similar to what you played on another of the album's tracks, "Pride And Joy."

CL: They're pretty similar, but they each have a different feel to them. I always thought "I'm Cryin'" was a better example of how I play a shuffle than "Pride And Joy." "Pride And Joy" got more attention because it was a more uplifting kind of song.

RS: Any decent blues drummer has to have a shuffle beat down pat. How did you develop your shuffle?

CL: Other than getting the right feeling down, a shuffle is a hard thing to make interesting unless you can find a way to give it your own signature. A shuffle isn't really as limiting as you might think; there are really many ways you can break it up and play it. One of the albums that really influenced me—as far as shuffles go—was an Albert Collins record called *The Cool Sound Of Albert Collins.* I don't even know who the drummer was on that album—but he was good, I can tell you that.

RS: What about the song "Testify"? What's the first thing that pops into your mind when you hear that song?

CL: That song was probably our biggest revelation on *Texas Flood.* When we recorded it, we made a mistake in it. So we stopped and went back and punched the whole band in on it instead of just redoing the track. That was Stevie's idea.

RS: And what about the song "Lenny"?

CL: I remember looking at the song as if it was some kind of jazz piece. We didn't labor over the song. That song was more a platform for Stevie's guitar playing than anything else.

RS: How much of what you played on *Texas Flood* was a direct reaction to what Stevie played on guitar?

CL: Almost all of it. That's how he liked it. You know, Stevie never liked to do anything the same way twice. We tried to make everything as spontaneous as we could get it. The sponaneity of a song was really our yardstick to determine if we had a song down or not. And I still like to live like that. Today, of course, that's hard to do, given the way records are made. Spontaneity doesn't always get a fair chance when you're talking about making records these days. If it does, it's in increments or pieces at a time.

RS: Are there drum parts or beats on *Texas Flood* that reappear on subsequent albums you did with Stevie and Double Trouble? How consistent was your style going from *Texas Flood* to *Couldn't Stand The Weather* and beyond?

CL: I like to think that as we made each record, I developed a different approach and style. But, honestly, I think everything I played on *Texas Flood* and the other albums ultimately had a thread of sameness going through it. We weren't big groundbreakers. What we tried to do was take the blues—which was a traditional kind of music—and present it in a new and interesting way.

John Bonham: "Black Dog"

Transcribed by Tom DeFaria

Call and response is what Led Zeppelin's "Black Dog" is all about. The vocalist makes the call, in free time, and the band responds with a thunderous blues lick. How the band begins each response in perfect time with each other is the mystery of "Black Dog." It sounds as if Bonham clicks his sticks twice to set the tempo. These clicks fall on beats 3 and the "&" of 3 in measures 2, 5, 8, and so on throughout the transcription. The stick clicks, for the most part, are difficult to hear in the recording. This gives the listener the impression the band can kick in, in perfect time, without a count-off. However, if you listen very carefully you can hear an occasional stick click. These stick clicks are notated in the transcription with an "x" on the snare drum line.

Due to the irregularities of measures 30 and 66, it would seem the stick clicks and/or body english were used to create the tempo and present the downbeat of the following measures. Our use of 10/8 and 9/8 time signatures is simply an attempt to notate what was played.

The main groove of the song, which emphasizes the upbeats instead of the downbeats, looks awkward on paper but is actually the perfect rhythmic accompaniment to the line the bass and guitar are playing. Also of note is Bonham's development of the two-bar rhythmic pattern starting at measure 67 and continuing to the end of the song. No fills here! Just subtle variations of the bass drum pattern, which provides a building intensity, interest, tension, and support underneath a blazing guitar solo.

Tremendous imagination and swing make John Bonham's playing on "Black Dog" and the rest of *Led Zeppelin IV* a masterpiece.

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Preparing A Sub

by Ken Ross

No matter how conscientious you are as a professional musician, there are times when you need to "sub out." This means paying a substitute to play in your absence. Rules and policies on subbing vary dramatically, depending on the job and location. For example, on Broadway you may sub out 50% of the time—as opposed to a road show, where you are discouraged from subbing out at all.

Well-qualified subs are hard to come by. This article focuses on suggestions for finding and preparing a qualified substitute.

Before you contact a sub, it is important that you first assess your needs. Consider the dates you will need covered and the salary you will pay, and be prepared to discuss any theater policies a sub should be made aware of. (For example, our theater policy dictates that a sub must observe a performance before he or she is hired to play.) You will also want to know your sub's availability for future dates, since you will both be investing a lot of time in preparation. Once you offer a sub the dates, you are bound to a commitment. If your sub accepts, he or she is also bound. There are no written contracts; this is an honor system that works well.

Salary is based on the musicians union scale for the type of service you are performing and where you are performing it. On Broadway, for example, the sub is paid New York City Broadway scale—which is specific, and covers such things as overtime and doubles (such as timpani and mallet keyboard). The sub is put on a payroll and paid directly from the theater by the house contractor. The sub also becomes eligible for certain benefits, including the pension and welfare fund through the musicians union.

If the gig is non-union, that presents a different situation. It is then necessary to negotiate a salary you both agree to. There are no standard contracts for non-union gigs, so you are on the honor system.

Another important detail is preparing your book. It must be comprehensive, yet as simple and straightforward as possible. It should be consistent and should use standard notation. Any unusual notation should be clearly marked. Neatness certainly counts. You don't want the sub struggling to decipher your notation rather than concentrating on the music. If there are any changes made in the book, I document this in the back of the book along with the date. This makes it easy to alert my sub to the new changes at a glance. Another idea I adopted is sketching a diagram of my setup. This helps my sub simulate the setup in practice.

The next consideration is how to find a qualified substitute. Getting recommendations for subs is easy; every musician has a few friends to suggest. But this is not always the most reliable method, and it can hurt your reputation. To increase the odds of finding the right musician for the job, I suggest starting with a recommendation from your musical director, who will probably recommend someone he or she has worked with in the past and feels comfortable with. Another reliable source can be a musician who has subbed for you in the past. He or she would be very familiar with the job requirements, and thus would be in a good position to recommend qualified subs. Lastly, I suggest calling a reputable contractor. Contractors stake their reputations on recommendations.

"I've had a visiting sub produce a tuna hero with chips and start munching away during the show."

As a general rule, your sub should use your equipment: everything from cymbals to sticks. After all, it is his or her job to come as close to duplicating your sound and performance as possible. It is *your* responsibility, though, to make sure your equipment is in good working order. I always leave spare drumheads, tools, tuning keys, and music stand light bulbs for my sub, in case a breakage occurs.

The drum setup is best left unchanged, since re-positioning can affect the sound and the sightline to the musical director. In certain cases some re-positioning is unavoidable, though. I play left handed, while all my subs are right handed—so I have figured out ways to minimize the problems of re-positioning my setup. For example, I try to duplicate my setup on both sides of my kit. I use identical cymbal setups on the right and left sides. I also use a double tom mount: one arm for my setup and the other for my sub's use. I also mount my ride cymbal off this mount and simply swing the boom arm around for my sub. Another idea is to place masking tape on the floor where the stands and pedals rest. I then label each piece of tape appropriately. This allows me to re-position my setup accurately and consistently. The larger instruments (timpani, mallet keyboards) are left alone because of the obvious inconvenience of moving them, and it doesn't seem to be a problem to play these instruments on either side.

Although it may not be mandatory, it is always wise to invite your prospective sub to observe your performance of the show. During this visit, provide the sub with a comfortable seat and a good view of both the conductor and yourself. You can be accommodating by providing a pencil, pad, and electrical outlet for tape recording. Space is a precious commodity in most pits, so be considerate of your fellow musicians' territory.

Alert your sub to any unusual noises or actions that might occur during a performance. For example, during the show *Annie Get Your Gun,* very loud gun shots were used. In *Me And My Girl,* a tiger rug is tossed on the drummer in the pit. During the show it is alright to let the sub know where there is an important visual cue from the conductor or on stage, but keep the conversation to a minimum so as not to incur the evil eye from the conductor. This visit can also be your last chance to screen your applicant. Technical skills are only a part of the job. As silly as it may sound, you might mention the policy on conduct in the pit. I've had a visiting sub produce a tuna hero with chips and start munching away during the show. The warning lights should also blink if you hear one of the following: "So, do you do this full-time?", "I'll *try* to be there by 7:30," "Can I bring my girlfriend?", or "How long have you guys been together?"

As diligent as you may be in recruiting and preparing for a sub, perfection is not always guaranteed. We were doing the show *Best Little Whorehouse In Texas,* and the band was on stage in cowboy garb. After a funny scene, we heard bellowing laughter. To our amazement, it was coming from the new sub bass player. It seems he really enjoyed the show—so much, in fact, that our conductor thought he should have bought a ticket. There was another incident at our theater when we offered a buffet-style lunch for patrons. My sub decided to help himself to a desert from the buffet table, then headed back to the green room to gobble up his treat. Standing by was our ever-watchful stage manager, who demanded that the sub surrender the desert. He refused, and a struggle followed. As it happened, the sub enjoyed his desert—but he never worked at our theater again.

A follow-up call to your sub soon after his or her performance is a good idea. Assuming everything went well and the musical director was satisfied, take this opportunity to thank your sub and confirm any future dates. If things did not go well, you're faced with an awkward situation. If your musical director does not want your sub back, it's your responsibility to relay this message. Be honest (but tactful), and make your criticism constructive. Try to end your conversation on a positive note and thank him again for his or her hard work.

Subbing requires the utmost musicianship. These musicians should be acknowledged for their extraordinary talents.

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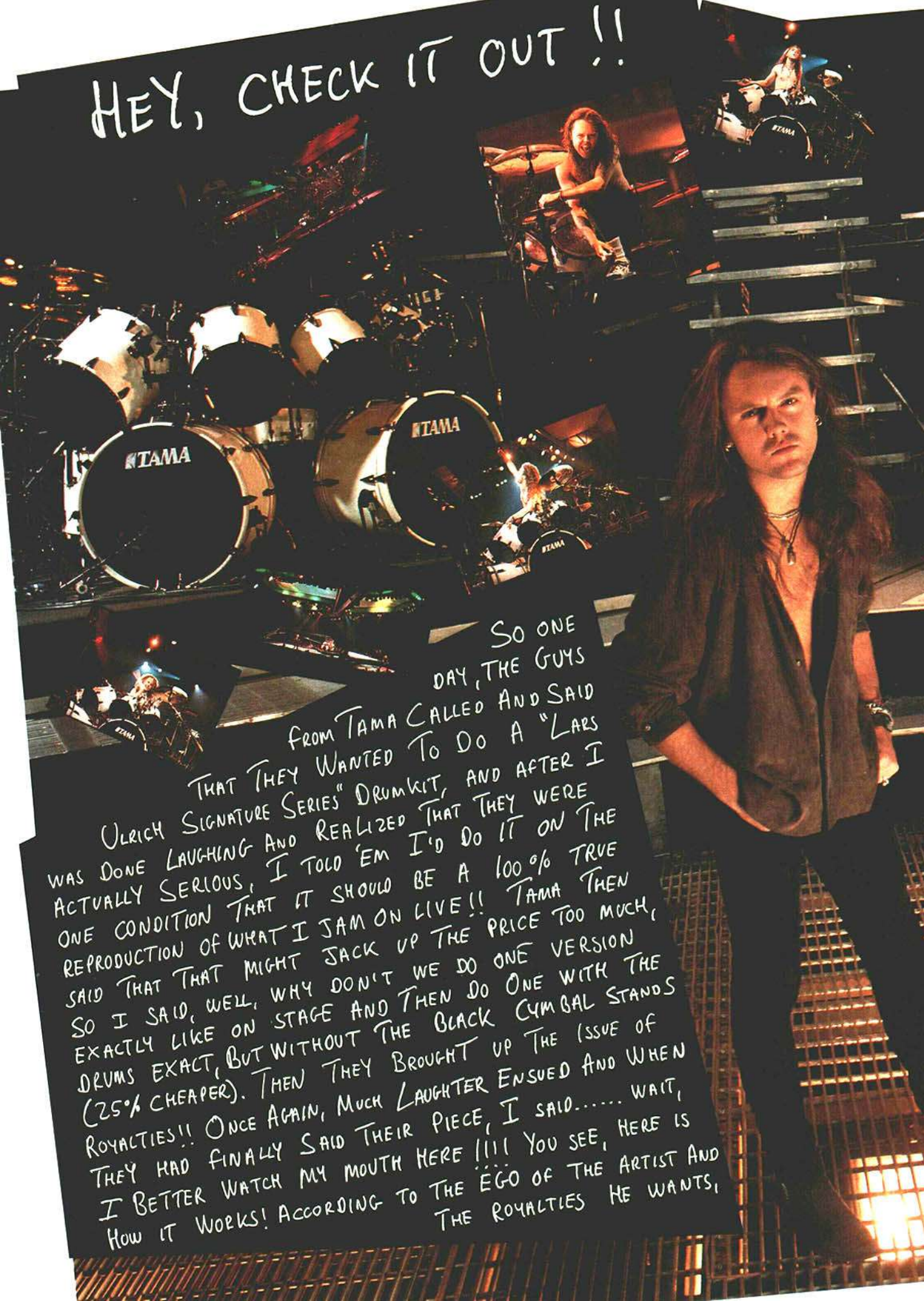
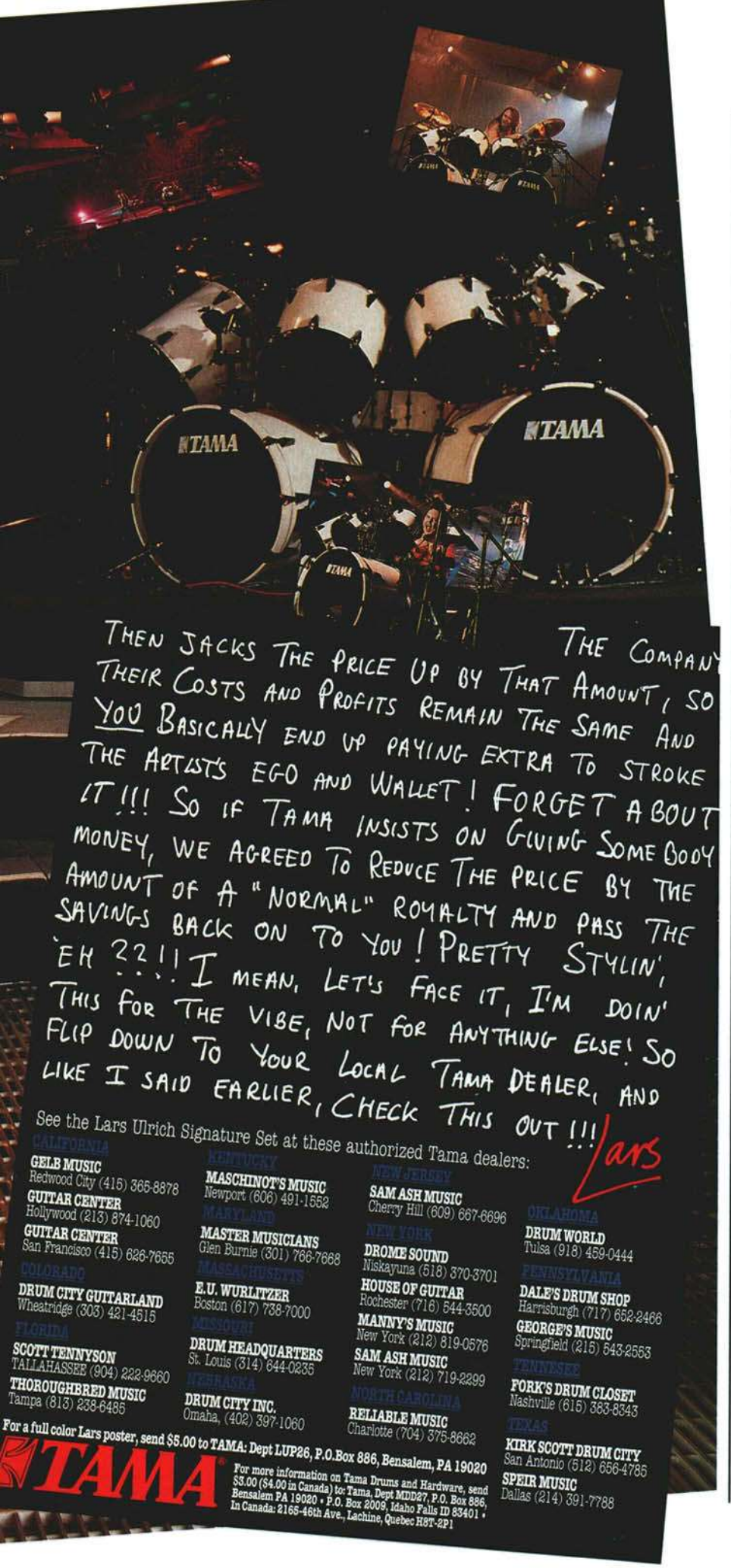


So one day, The Guys from Tama called and said that they wanted to do a "Lars Ulrich Signature Series" drumkit, and after I was done laughing and realized that they were actually serious, I told 'em I'd do it on the one condition that it should be a 100% true reproduction of what I jam on live!! Tama then said that that might jack up the price too much, so I said, well, why don't we do one version exactly like on stage and then do one with the drums exact, but without the black cymbal stands (25% cheaper). Then they brought up the issue of royalties!! Once again, much laughter ensued and when they had finally said their piece, I said..... wait, I better watch my mouth here!!!! You see, here is how it works! According to the ego of the artist and the royalties he wants,



continued from page 35

tinker around and come up with some melody and think, 'Gee, that sounds sort of Greek,'" recalls Chris Pedersen. "So we'd sort of fake a little Greek thing. We all had limited experiences listening to Greek music, but we had a vague idea what the music to *Zorba The Greek* or some classic tune sounded like. I don't really have an interest in sitting down and figuring out what makes something sound like that. I kind of prefer it as a more subconscious process. Because you have no idea what you *should* be doing, you come up with something a little bit different but still with a Greek flavor. To me, that's more interesting anyway than someone who has a Ph.D. in musicology and knows exactly how to ape a Greek tune. It's kind of a paradox, but it's almost *more* original to fake it."

D'Cuckoo's style is influenced by Japanese-style taiko drumming, Shona-style marimba music from Zimbabwe, Caribbean, West African, and some Middle Eastern music, and a multitude of Western pop styles. But they say that the band retains their own distinct style because of the way they integrate different rhythms with their vocals. "We do perform a few traditional marimba songs from Zimbabwe," they explain, "and we always credit their origins when doing so. Although we play traditional parts, we will and do take liberties with the rhythms according to the song and the inspiration at the time."

Before You Hit

Before you actually sit down to integrate ethnic styles into your drumming, it might be helpful to do a little homework. "Try to see, study, and listen to as much music as possible to develop your own style of playing," say the D'Cuckoos. "Whenever possible, try to study with the masters of the cultures that you are interested in learning more about." With the current popularity in "world" music, the D'Cuckoos suggest that a good first step might be to check out the record labels specializing in ethnic musics, like Real World, Shanachie, Rykodisc, Flying Fish, Mango, Triloca, and Claremont/Mountain.

Mitch Marine found it helpful to see

how percussion sections in Latin bands were playing in order to figure out how he would play the parts on the drumset. "Before that," he says, "all the percussion instruments on records sounded jumbled up to me. I could hear the parts, but I wasn't always sure who was doing them. Then I saw some bands in person, and I began to understand the roles of each instrument—how in a cascara pattern, for instance, the timbale would switch over from hitting the side of the timbales to the cowbell or the bell of the cymbal."

Marine suggests that it's also important to see what *dancers* do to authentic rhythms "to figure out exactly *what* is making it happen—what rhythms are underneath. Look at the relationship between the rhythms and the audience," he suggests, "how they feed off each other and what the musicians do to make the people dance the way they do. When I listened to polka records, I could maybe pick off the ride cymbal going "ding dinga-ding dinga-di-di-di-di-ding," and I would try to cop it, but I wouldn't understand that there was necessarily a reason for it. When I watched the dancers, though, I understood *why* that was happening."

In most areas, live klezmer music isn't nearly as accessible as Latin music, and many of the early klezmer drummers are no longer playing or have passed away. So Klezmatic David Licht has had to rely a lot on listening to old recordings to learn what has been done. "Having access to the YIVO tapes was so important," David says. "Most of it was just getting the music into my head. You have to work a little harder, because it's not crystal clear stereo—though an engineer, Jim Nevins, is remastering some of the old stuff for a CD that's coming out on the Yazoo label."

David says he's been been fortunate enough to be able to check out some live drummers over the years, including his early teacher, Sammy Anflick. A source he recently delved into, though, is one that most of us could check out from our local video shop. "I saw *The Benny Goodman Story* on TV recently," David explains, "and there's a scene where Benny and Gene Krupa are playing with trumpeter Ziggy Elman, who played with a lot of the main klezmer musicians of

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the time. They're doing 'And The Angels Sing,' but there's this refrain where it goes into klezmer for maybe sixteen bars, and Krupa plays like one measure of [the klezmer tune] 'Shtiller Bulgar,' all on cymbal and maybe bass drum. The accents are just amazing—and it's actually Gene Krupa playing, not Sal Mineo or someone."

Reading

If you want to learn a new type of music, you obviously should learn how to read music, right? Well, according to our drummers, not necessarily. "You don't have to read music to be a D'Cuckoo," is this band's take on the question, "but at times it definitely helps to understand notation, especially when learning notated parts, and it helps to know music theory when we compose. But it can also be a hindrance. Most cultures—except Western—live and breath their music, which is a way of life. Music is passed on through the people—not notation—as a way of learning and inspiring. There are so many subtle nuances in music from non-Western cultures that notation simply cannot embrace. The only way to learn those nuances is to listen and feel, and that can take a lifetime."

David Licht echoes similar sentiments: "I prefer music that is just learned through the airways, not on charts. I read a little bit, though I wouldn't feel comfortable subbing for somebody in a Broadway pit. I do know that a chart is a road map, though, and it's important, so I have some knowledge."

"I'm not an intellectual musician," Lee Partis says of himself. "I can't read music, though I can certainly *hear* the difference between styles. I wouldn't deter a student from wanting to read, though I definitely wouldn't tell him to do it. I'd tell him to go out there and play!"

Because of the nature of their music, perhaps it's more understandable that the Brave Combo drummers have a different opinion on the matter. "I think it's great to learn to read," says Phil Hernandez, "especially for a lot of the Latin stuff, where there's a lot of percussion going on. You can see and hear at the same time how the bells and conga parts and clave relate to each other."

"I know some people have a problem with reading," says Mitch Marine, "but I never understand why someone would *not* want to learn something—especially if you're going to do independence stuff. If you've got ideas in your head, the only way you can get them to your hands and feet is by having some independence. And some of the books on independence are fairly easy, without a lot of reading involved."

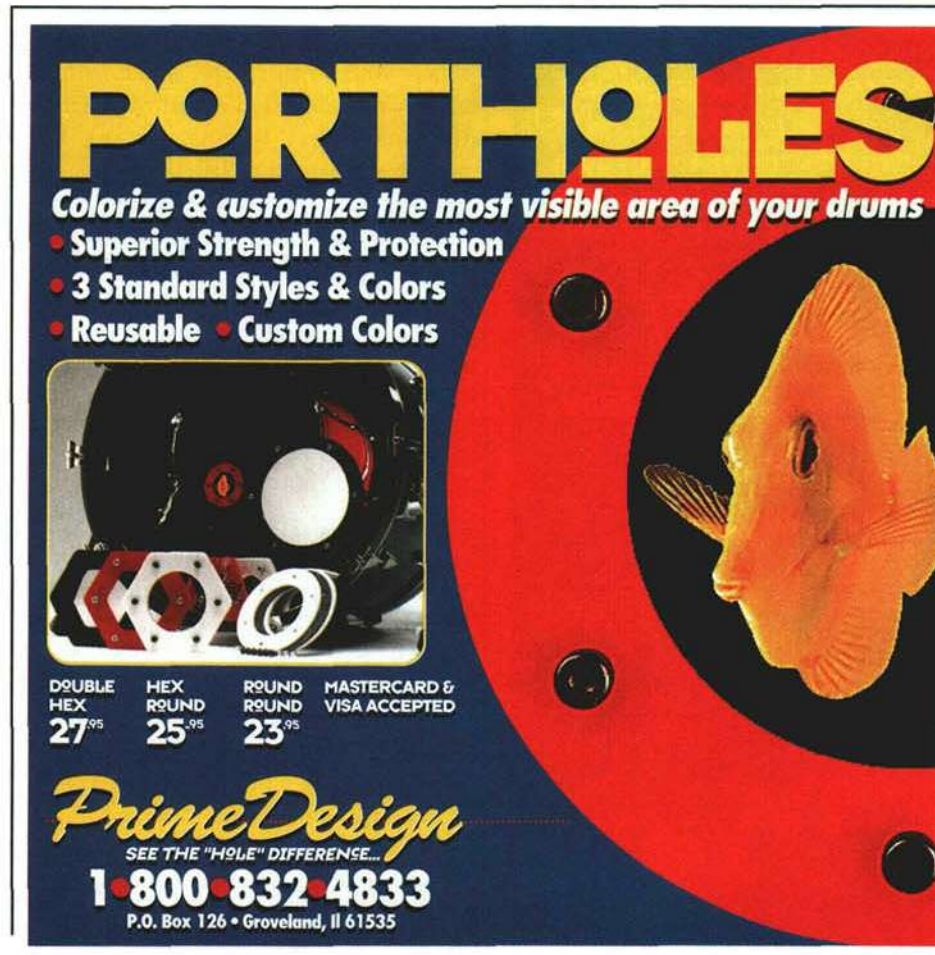
Behind The Kit

Let's look more closely at how each of our drummers integrates ethnic music styles into their drumming.

Before joining the Oyster Band, Lee Partis spent some time playing with African bands, and found that applying his African-influenced drumming style to the jigs and reels of the Oyster Band worked surprisingly well. "I found that that sort of rhythm underneath jigs and reels sounds great," Lee explains, "and it fit in precisely with the Oysters. They would play me traditional kinds of tunes, and I'd think, 'This music is just so *funky.*'

"Now, polkas are different, because there are a lot of approaches. They're quite difficult to play and put a lot of feeling into. Rolling snare parts are very effective. The way I play the polka beat on 'NewYork Girls' is almost like a shuffle...not quite New Orleans-ish...but Richie Hayward would understand what's going on. It's a rolling snare rhythm that contains threes, but it also contains that off beat going against the bass drum.

"I really base my drumming around the bass drum," Partis explains. "I favor playing it very straight, and playing the more complicated rhythms on the top kit, mainly on the hi-hat and snare, using the toms when I want the rhythm to get heavy. Essentially the bass drum pins it all down. Some people's approach to African music and rocking up traditional music is to think in terms of changing the bass drum, but I always look to keep it dead on all fours or eights. And I find that people I play with *want* me to play like that. They'll say, 'Yeah, that's great, I didn't notice you,' and to me that's



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Mitch Marine has noticed that different styles of polkas suggest different rhythms. As he mentioned earlier, what he played was often directly suggested by the dancers: "For instance, in Eastern-style polka," Mitch explains, "I found that the dancers were subdividing the beat into 16th-note kinds of things. It's also pretty quick—and they dance pretty darn fast.

"Now, the Tex-Mex style is slower," he continues, "and they don't move their feet off the ground; they slide, like a country & western thing. So there isn't that subdivision underneath. It has a real definite downbeat/upbeat kind of thing. Then the German style is somewhere in between those two. When you get closer to each polka style, you find out there can also be regional differences. A friend of mine in San Antonio showed me how in that particular style, the kick drum hardly does anything except lay a bomb every now and then."

"I was surprised at all the subtleties and the feel of polkas when I first started playing in Brave Combo," adds Phil Hernandez. "A lot of the Polish and European waltzes have a lot of rolling snare kind of things. And on an oberek, which is more of a rocking waltz, you're really laying into the snare, but then switching the snare/bass thing from 'bap bap boom, bap bap boom' to 'boom boom bap, boom boom bap.'"

Polkas aren't all Brave Combo specialize in. Latin styles are also featured very prominently. Both Phil Hernandez and Mitch Marine have particular ways to deal with these grooves on the drumset, too. "One thing I learned in Combo, playing all these different styles," says Phil, "is to look at the drumset *not* as a drumset, because on a lot of the salsa stuff, there isn't even a drumset playing. So I think in terms of, 'My toms are my congas now, my snare rim is a slap sound, and there's my bell.' So I would match the kick drum with the bass line in certain sections, do the cascara pattern on the cymbal bell, and do the clave with my snare hand. On cha-chas, if our percussionist, Joe, is playing the conga part, I would play the guiro part on my hi-hat. If I was playing a conga part with a rimshot and toms, he'd then play the guiro part."

One trap Phil says should be avoided is feeling like each limb should be playing something on any given tune. "I've been trying to break that habit," he says, "just to conserve energy—especially on a long gig—and to concentrate more on keeping good time, on the clave, and on keeping everything together."

Phil suggests that it's easier to play any style if you can focus in on the main characteristics of that style. "For instance, the cha-cha is keeping the quarter notes on the cowbell," he explains, "and the salsa is about using the right sound source at the right time—on the chorus or on the verse, playing either the bell or on the side of the floor tom—and keeping the clave straight. A lot of the Latin stuff is about playing the right clave on particular styles."

Phil adds that by thinking in terms of putting on different playing "hats," he can more easily come up with appropriate parts to play on given styles. "That way," he explains, "when they call out a cumbia or maybe a salsa, I already have an idea what I could play, and I can just adapt those fills and breaks to whatever the song is. I try to keep it pretty separated, just to make it easier on myself, instead of having to go through a bunch of different ideas in my head."

Sometimes bringing ethnic rhythms to the drumset calls for starting from scratch, though, as Mitch Marine found when Brave Combo decided to take on the Armenian folk tune, "Chem-oo-Chem." "'Chem-oo-Chem is a 6/8 over 3/4 thing," Mitch explains, "so I accented the 6/8 first with the kick drum going 123456, 123456. The hi-hat with a tambourine attached would be going 123, 123, and I would make the snare drum do all this crazy stuff on top. Then in the middle of the song, to switch things up, I would really accent the 6/8 part with the tambourine as well as the bass drum, to the point where the 3/4 thing was the really heavy accent. I'd kind of flip those things around, because that's what that rhythm does anyway. Then everybody else in the band would be doing the same thing."

The members of D'Cuckoo have different playing priorities than our other drummers, both because of the style of their music and because much of it is

played on keyboard-based instruments. In a group interview, D'Cuckoo's Tina Blaine, Sarita Escobar, Debbie Lane, and Candice Pacheco talked about the playing methods their music requires. "First and foremost, we are ensemble players," the players agree. "Listening to each other is crucial for our parts to lock in. The fast, polyrhythmic, 16th-note intensive playing style of percussion-based music necessitates that we really play *with* each other to make the ensemble happen. Although we all take solos at various times, the effect of our group is that the whole unit is greater than any of the individual parts. The bottom line is that time is everyone's responsibility.

"Odd meters within a pulse are definitely more challenging for Western people," they continue, "and we were raised with 4/4 time as well. But we've trained ourselves to layer other rhythms on top of the four; our favorite feel is 6/8 over 4/4. Trading off straight 16th notes taiko-style and keeping it smooth, and playing inside 8th-note patterns are also challenges for us. And singing syncopated melodies while playing opposing marimba parts burns new neural paths."

In figuring out his parts, David Licht says, "It's just taking it one song at a time. Basically the original drum used in Klezmer was called a *puk,"* he explains, "which is a combination of a big bass drum and cymbal. It's just one low frequency and one high frequency, and in music for dancing, that's all you need. The snare drum came later, with the military and jazz drumming influences on the music."

Like in any style of music, David explains that there are basic rhythms in klezmer—and basic ways to play them. "One basic rhythm is *the freilach,* which is also known as a *bulgar.* 'Freilach' means 'happy,' which is what the rhythm feels like. It's counted with a bass or piano playing in 4/4, but the drums are playing almost a 3 3 2 feel, with the accent on 1. The feel comes from the tension between the bass playing straight fours against the drums. Charlie Byrd from the Klezmer Conservatory Band calls it the 'oy-vey,' like a Jewish clave. It's not counted straight, and there are lots of rolls. I've put a drag in there, and there are different ways to accent it.

"There are other rhythms, too," David explains. "The *sirba* is a very quick, Russian two-beat. *Turkishers* are like five-beat phrases. The *hora*—not the Israeli hora, but the Yiddish hora—is very hard to count. It's a slower rhythm that's almost like a five feel. In most songs, it will lead into a freilach. The Klezmatics play a song called 'Heisertartar,' which starts out like a freilach, goes into a hora, and ends up in a turkisher. So it's almost like a showcase for the different rhythms and styles.

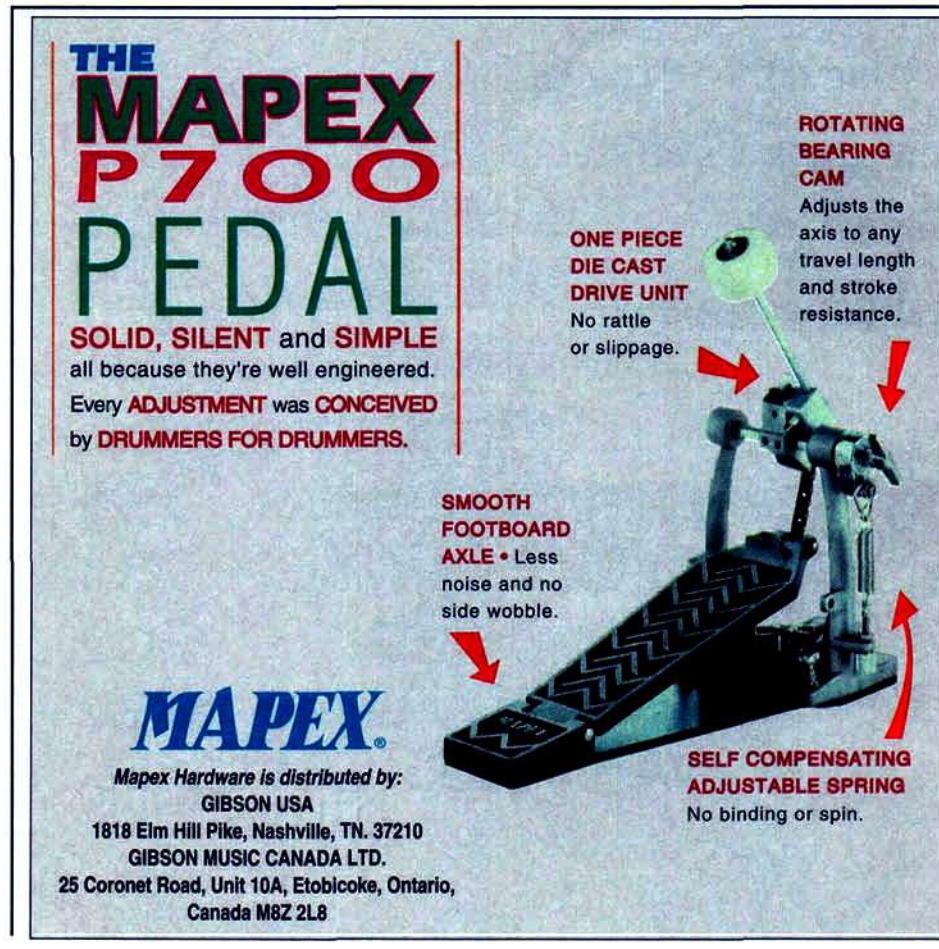
"There are a lot of different ways to approach the drumset in klezmer," David continues. "Irving Graetz was the drummer with Dave Taras, who's an incredible Klezmer clarinetist. When I saw Irving play, I found that his approach and sticking to bulgars were the opposite of the way I was playing, which is basically one hand playing 16th notes and the other playing the accents. I'm not sure how it developed that way, but it's just the most comfortable way for me.

"The music can be complex," Licht says, "but I try to make it simple. So I try to think sometimes in a marching style, alternating what the bass drum and hi-hat are doing and kind of copying that puk thing from earlier on. On a *chusidl,* which is a bouncy, pre-wedding 4/4 song, the bass drum and hi-hat will be together. But when I play a Russian *sher,* which is similar to a chusidl, I'll turn the hi-hat around so that it's alternating with the bass drum. In a way I relate it to reggae, with the hi-hat giving the heavy 2 and 4."

Rock 'N' Roll!

Since *most* of the drummers we spoke to have a background in rock 'n' roll, it makes sense that each would eventually come to a point where they thought of how their rock leanings mixed with their newfound ethnic interests. Chris Pedersen says that his ethnic forays actually reignite his love of rock: "Rock 'n' roll is always part of our history," says Pedersen. "Though you do get kind of sick of it and want to experiment with something else. After doing that, when you go back to play a rock song, it suddenly sounds fresh and is a lot of fun to play."

"At one time I wanted to deny it," says Mitch Marine, "but my roots are in rock.



And in Brave Combo, if you look at the instrumentation—drumset, electric guitar, electric bass, saxophone—you see that that kind of lends itself to a rock feel. When I'm playing a polka or whatever, if someone wants me to rock out, no problem. I know what to do, which is not so much hit harder, but there's a power thing, an attitude thing. You can even throw in an occasional backbeat. Take cha-chas, for instance: If it's a section of a tune where it's time to rock out, then I would just head for the ride cymbal and play 2 and 4 on the snare. But my left foot might still be playing a clave pattern on a wood block, so there would still be the cha-cha thing."

"In a way, I think the psychedelic rock I play with Bongwater and bands like that comes into the Klezmatics more than the other way around," David Licht explains. "I was keeping the klezmer music in kind of a special place. There's always an exchange going on, though. Playing psychedelic, when I take a solo with the Klezmatics, I don't hold back. In a way, volume also has a lot to do with it; in Europe, for instance, the Klezmatics would play a lot of rock clubs. And, since I'm playing with both electric and acoustic instruments and behind singers in the Klezmatics, that has helped me keep my sense of dynamics in other bands."

That Sound

Thus far we've mostly talked about integrating ethnic rhythms into our drumming. But what about the actual *sounds* of ethnic instruments? Though it's tempting to go out and buy all sorts of ethnic musical "toys," many of us don't have the space or money to accommodate such luxuries. Because of such limitations, Chris Pedersen has found ways to creatively suggest ethnic instruments with his drumset. "In Monks, we have certain sections that remind me of Celtic things, and I'll kind of fake a Celtic accent there—or what I perceive it to be. That's what's great about music that doesn't have drumset in it in the first place. You hear something, and the rhythm is really cool and the sounds they're using are pretty neat, so you go, 'I'll try to fake this,' and you make attempts with what you have.

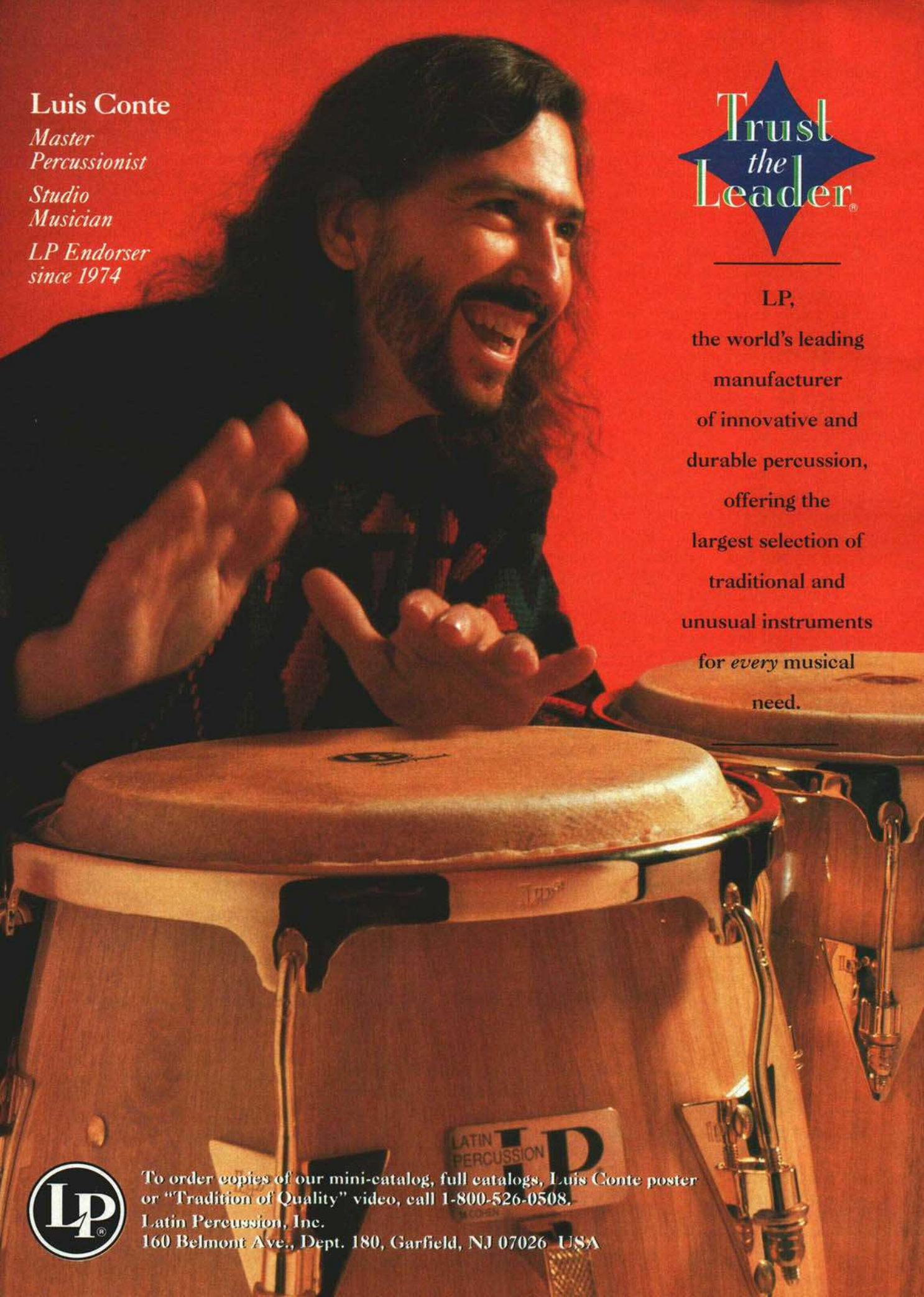
"I'll tune my high tom really weird, maybe mis-tune one of the lugs—give it an uncomfortable ring that engineers would hate—and I'll use that as sort of a fake timbale. I found that I can hit my snare drum and that tom at the same time as a certain kind of accent, maybe doing a particular kind of fill. It gives the snare a little more body, more bite. I used to want one of those huge, flappy-sounding gong drums because I heard that sound in Indonesian music. So to ape that, I got an 18" floor tom and tuned it way down.

"I also hit the bell of my cymbals a lot," Chris continues. "I don't really use a ride. You can also hit the drum differently. You can push the stick into the head really hard and make it decay really fast. And you can get an idea like that by hearing something played on a completely different instrument. That way you've come up with something new—maybe something that someone else hasn't done in rock music."

Mitch Marine describes how he imitated the dumbek part in "Chem-oo-Chem," the Armenian song he talked about earlier: "I listened to the dumbek pattern and tried to make that sound with my snare drum, using a cross-stick with my left hand and then hitting my right stick real close to the edge of the drum, which would approximate most of the high end of the dumbek. Then I would bring the stick in a little bit if I wanted a little more punch. On the original there was also this tambourine part, so I put one on my hi-hat and played it with my foot."

"That's the beauty of approximating sounds on the kit," Pedersen says. "That's how these styles emerge in the first place. I guess that's how reggae started. They tried to tune into AM stations overseas on some shortwave band, and they couldn't get a lot of frequencies, so a lot of it had this real woofy bass, and that was their aesthetic because that's what they heard. And that's kind of cool."

Sound is also a big concern for D'Cuckoo, since most of their music is made on various electronic instruments that they have designed themselves, including their "turtle drum" multi-pads. Acoustic drumset and other percussion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sounds are employed in various ways, though. "Timbre is everything—next to rhythm," say the D'Cuckoos. "Because of sample technology, we are able to have traditional trap drum sounds, ethnic percussion—or any sound in the universe—simply by hitting one of our pads. If it's a hip-hop rhythm that we're playing, we'll use a booming kick and a fat backbeat.

"With acoustic drums, you're limited to the timbral qualities of the instrument—a snare drum will never sound like a flute. But there are times when there is nothing like the sound of an acoustic instrument. For example, you can't duplicate the playing style required for a conga on an electronic trigger pad. So we've compensated by adding acoustic drums to our stage setup."

Home

Hopefully this article has set you thinking about finding ways to mix ethnic music into your drumming. But now that we've got you thinking—and hopefully playing—what can you do with these ideas? Well, a lot depends on where you live. If you're from a big city, there might be musicians right down the street willing to put a band together based on all kinds of ideas. Players like David Licht and Lee Partis have taken full advantage of living in major metropolitan areas. New York, for instance, is home to clubs like The Knitting Factory and Wetlands, where the Klezmatics and many other left-of-center bands can find sympathetic ears. And London, where Partis lives, is a melting pot of many different cultures, which Lee found very helpful during his days playing in African bands.

The members of Brave Combo, on the other hand, are from around Denton, Texas, which isn't a big city by any standards, but *is* the home of North Texas State University, one of the most respected music schools in the country. North Texas is a strong magnet for good players with all sorts of musical interests. But as far as a full-time career in ethnic-based music, Mitch Marine warns against assuming that the environment surrounding a well-known music school can sustain such plans. For that, you may need to move to a big city. "A university situation is very different from a professional situation," Marine explains. "We are talking about younger players in the area who haven't done a whole lot of other things besides studying. The reason I want to move to New York, for instance, is because I want to be with more of the real stuff."

Mitch also suggests that areas other than big cities don't have the support system necessary for hungry minds. "Radio down here makes it real tough to know anything else is going on," he explains. "Luckily, there are two radio stations in Dallas that play a lot of different things, but even if you hear it on the radio, it's hard to find in the stores— even in Dallas. If I'm in Chicago, though, I know where I can get polka stuff: There's a little record shop that hardly anybody would know about in a liquor store. I've also found a Middle Eastern grocery store and restaurant, and they've got some really cool tapes and stuff. And there's a great Latin shop in the subway under Times Square in New York."

There's a flip side to the coin, though. According to Phil Hernandez, "The thing I found about Brave Combo is that the whole attitude of *not* fitting in is what makes it work. I used to live in Houston for a while, and there's tons of reggae bands there, and they all kind of fit in the same genre. So I think that doing sort of a wow-African-based rhythmic thing has helped us a lot. Lately there has been a big movement in world music, and a lot of the clubs are opening their ears. It's a good sign seeing an appreciation for a music that a lot of people are not familiar with."

Perhaps these last thoughts by our Brave Combo drummers, taken together, best illustrate the situation that "ethnic" drummers find themselves in—and must work their way through: Though taking the road less traveled often makes the going more hazardous, when we finally reach our destination, our rewards are that much more satisfying. Digging through record bins in thrift shops and checking out the local polka drummer in the Polish Day parade might not be as *cool* as transcribing John Bonham performances or going to a Billy Cobham clinic. But in the end, they might have just as profound an effect on our journey towards being the "different drummer" to which truly unique bands play.

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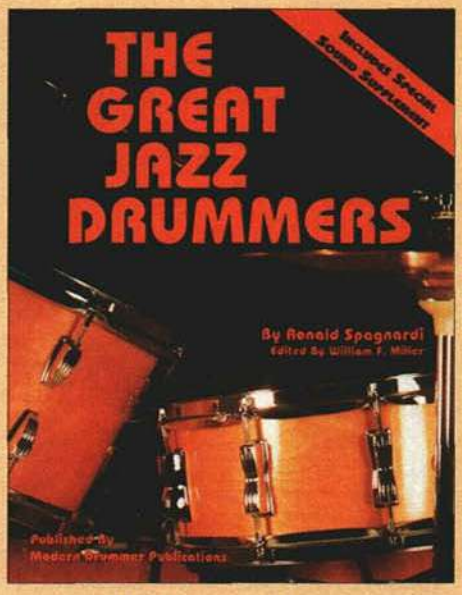

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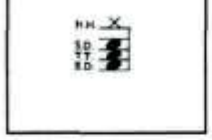
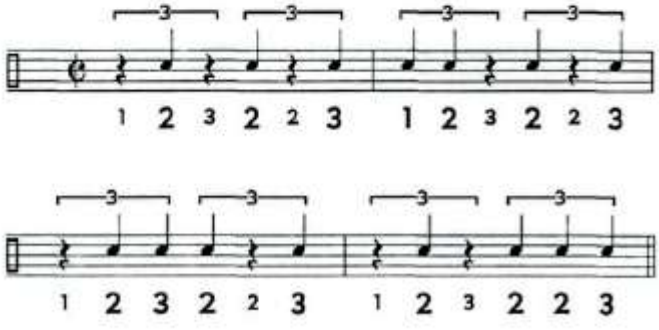


Metric modulation is the use of common note subdivisions found within a certain meter to create a new time feel within the original rhythm. This technique is found within the playing of many drummers, both contemporary and of earlier periods. Listen to Elvin Jones, Art Blakey, and Tony Williams; you're sure to hear and feel it. Vinnie Colaiuta comes to mind as a contemporary drummer who uses time modulation to perfection.

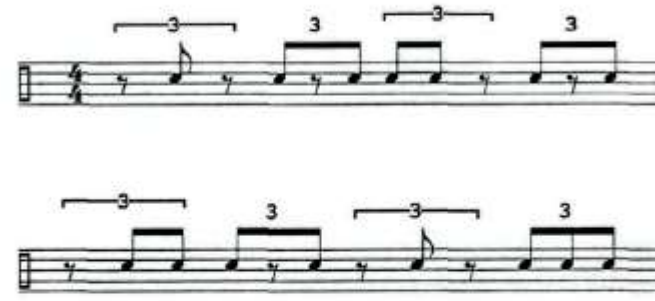
There are many methods one can use to achieve metric modulation. I've chosen to use common, or in some cases not-so-common, Afro-Caribbean phrases to inspire the ideas. As always, remember that you should use these ideas as a "jumping-off point." Understand where they come from and how they get to where they go. Then it's up to you to be the creator of new, individualistic ideas. These ideas are to be used in musical ways, not indiscriminately. *Always* be musical.

I have been interested in using Latin phrases to modulate time ever since I heard the example we will be investigating today. It's a rhythmic break called a "cierre," which I found on an album by the Cuban group Los Papines. When I first heard this rhythmic break, I couldn't quite figure it out. The effect seemed to make time stand still. It worked to perfection! Songo was the main groove being played. Actually it was more like a Latin/funk groove. One way you may want to practice this, after you figure out the reading part of it, is to set up a medium-tempo groove (let's say m.m.=80). I'll first present the idea to you in cut time, because this is the way it was originally played. I've included some reading help for you: Presented is the way I count triplets. This method allows for an ease of reading if figures are written based on a triplet pulse.

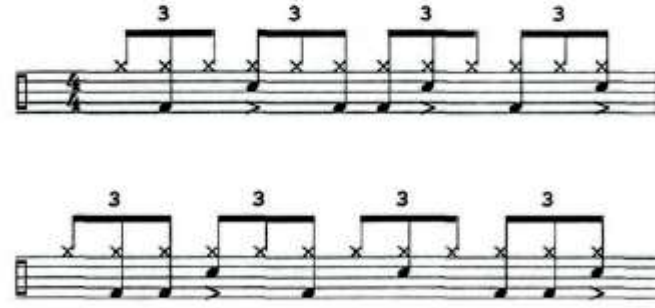


The break was played by the rhythm section, and then the original time continued. When you play it, you will feel how the time shifts, in essence creating a new time feel. This is one of the effects of metric modulation.

What I've chosen to do with the break is create a groove idea. First, here's the idea presented as 8th-note triplets. This is done because I want to set up the groove in common time.



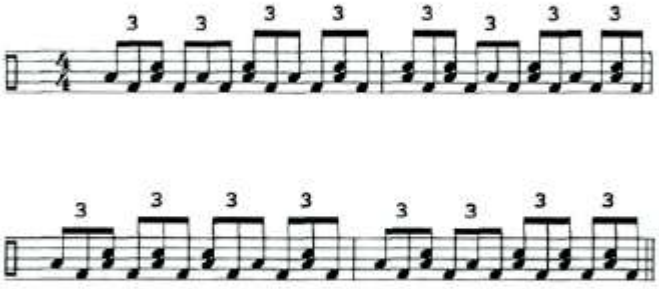
Now I'll orchestrate the cierre between bass and snare. Added to this will be 8th notes played on the hi-hat. These 8th notes are the notes that make up 8th-note triplets. What has happened is that I've created a new time feel within the existing time frame. Set up the metronome so you can really feel how this will sound. Of course this is just the first of many ways this idea can be orchestrated. You can find a "half-time" feel within the new time, as well as using the new modulated meter to set up a new feel. Once you understand the clave of the situation—the foundation of the idea—it's up to your creative imagination to find your own original application.



One other way I use this cierre is as a fill/solo idea. Of course, you may choose to use the idea just as it is. I like to orchestrate these Afro-Caribbean-based rhythms, and I've found some very interesting applications. The following idea has the original cierre played in the snare drum, counter to 8th-note triplets between the bass drum and low tom. In playing this, I open the closed flams created between the tom and snare for a maximum, "rolling"-type effect.

Keep in mind that this is just one way of applying the idea. I will sometimes shorten this particular application and make it fit in other time slots. My main reason for developing this idea

was to work on the bass drum/floor tom idea of playing continuous 8th or 16th notes (in triplet from). From its development I've found many other patterns within the original. Here's the idea:



Interpreting this cierre is totally up to you. It can be used in various formats/sticking ideas, fill/solo ideas, and, as presented in examples 1-3, metric modulation ideas. There are many other examples found throughout Afro-Caribbean music. In the next *Latin Symposium,* we'll use a common rhythm found in 6/8 patterns as a template for developing more metric modulation ideas. In the meantime, investigate the music and enjoy it!

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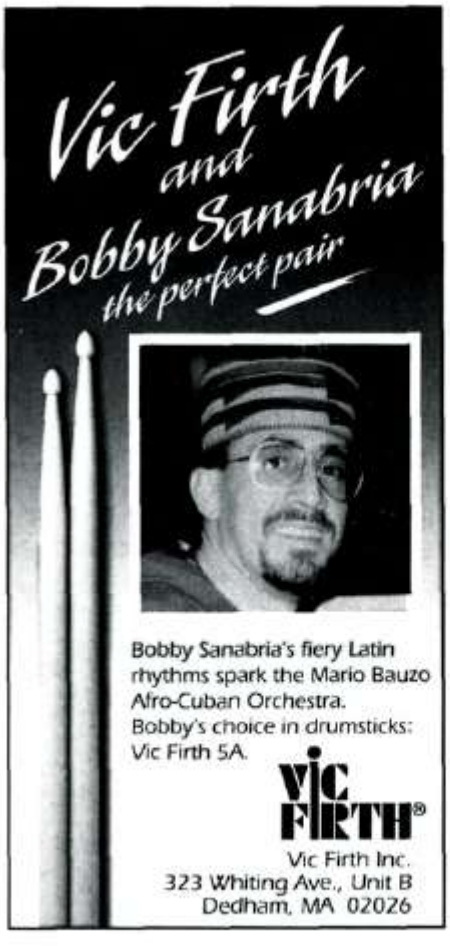


Hitting The Road On A Budget

by Mark Zonder

After the actual recording of an album—and the subsequent video—the next important step in the promotion of a recording is a tour. Even though a recording can have great distribution from a record company (and we all know what MTV can do for promotion), people still need to be introduced to your band *live*. There's also a complete experience people get at a live show—whether in an arena or at a local pub—that's different from what they get from watching a video or listening to a recording. Many bands are perceived differently after being seen live. Obviously, it's up to every band to turn touring into a positive, profitable venture.

Since touring is very expensive, most bands don't enjoy the luxury that platinum-selling rock bands generally enjoy, though *all* touring can be physically and mentally exhausting—and financially risky. But touring can also be the single most *satisfying* experience in one's musical life. This might seem a bit stretched, but until you've done it, don't knock it. Let's take a look at a few things to keep in mind to make it even more satisfying.

Gear

Assuming your tour is on a tight budget, special consideration should be taken when it comes to the drum gear you take. The best advice I can give is to be prepared for *anything*. Obviously on a budget tour you can't carry two drumsets, so your one set should come with spare parts. Always have a spare bass drum pedal and hi-hat stand on hand. Keep them within reach during a show so that if you have a breakdown, they can be changed between songs. Having a carpet with your stands and pedals marked out is also a must. This saves time and ensures that your kit is set up the same—day in and day out.

You should also carry an adequate supply of heads. You may not realize it, but you'll be playing harder than usual due to the excitement of a live show, and you're apt to go through heads much faster. If the budget makes it impossible to change heads every night, you might think about using heavier heads to ensure a longer life. Take special consideration of the snare drum batter head, since this is the head most likely to break. You might feel as though you're giving up a bit in tone, but the durability factor far outweighs it in priority. A second snare is also a must, and spares of all kinds of parts are needed. Along with a *more* than adequate supply of drumsticks, don't forget your duct tape. It works to hold things together, muffle drums that ring too much, hold up your song list, fix that ripped laundry bag, and solve a host of other difficulties too numerous to mention.

"Become very familiar with your equipment. When things break—and they *will*—you'll need to know how to fix them."

Stick Tossing

You've just finished the best set of your life. The sellout crowd is going nuts, and there's nothing left to do but toss your sticks out to some exuberant fan—right? Wrong! Though this may look great on the video, it's going to get very expensive—especially if stick wrap is involved. If the stick is broken, fine, but at five to six dollars a pair, five to six shows a week, this could become a financial catastrophe.

However, there is one good solution. Many stick companies offer "second" sticks, which, due to some manufacturing defect, are considerably cheaper and can usually be bought by the gross. These sticks are perfect for tossing. I usually autograph them and write the year of the tour or the recording that we're supporting.

It's very easy to get carried away and end up throwing out two dozen sticks a night. Try to control yourself. Tossing only a couple of sticks a night actually makes it more special for the people who get one. It always looks funny after a show if half the fans are running around with sticks in their hands. Also, be sure to keep a couple of these sticks on the bus. You never know when a fan will ask for one. Old, autographed drumheads are also great items for fans—much more impressive than guitar picks!

Rack 'Em Up

With the popularity of electronics nowadays, you should have no fear of taking electronic gear on the road. However, a few precautions should be taken. First, all electronic gear should be in ;

shock-mounted rack. This is a rack with a two-inch foam liner around it, which absorbs shock when loaded and unloaded from the equipment truck. Remember, even though a piece of gear is screwed in from the front and appears to be safe, constant banging will bend the front plate.

You also need to support all gear from the bottom. If all the pieces lay on top of one another with no spaces, you'll be safe. But be careful. Make sure you have spare cords, a soldering iron, and a long AC cord to make sure you get power. *Never rely on the venue to have stuff like this.* Become very familiar with your equipment—how it's put together, how it works, what hooks to what. When things break—and they *will*—you'll need to know low to fix them. Electronics can be very exciting during a live show, but very embarrassing when things go wrong.

Shaping Up

It's very important to stay in good physical shape when you're out on the road. Playing hard every night takes its toll, especially if you're not prepared for it. So try to maintain good eating and sleeping habits. Vitamins are a good idea, as is a healthful diet. Even though dining conditions may be less than perfect on tour, it's still possible to eat *right.* And there's plenty of time to sleep, even though it might not be during the hours you're used to. It takes the body roughly three weeks of a changed sleeping habit to adjust. You might even want to begin your new routine before the :our starts.

It's also extremely important to emphasize the fact that drugs of *any* kind will only hurt you. Excessive drinking will also take its toll. *Drugs and alcohol have no place on the road.* Enough said.

You should also plan on having stage clothes that can be rinsed but nightly and worn day to day. You won't have time to do a full wash every day, and wearing the same clothes after a sweaty performance isn't a very good idea!

Hand lotion is another must. You'll most likely be going into different climates, and when your hands get dry, they have a tendency to split and crack. It's a good idea to put some lotion on at bedtime. Hydrogen peroxide is also a good disinfectant to bring with you to clean cuts and prevent infections. It's very hard to play well with swollen or infected hands.

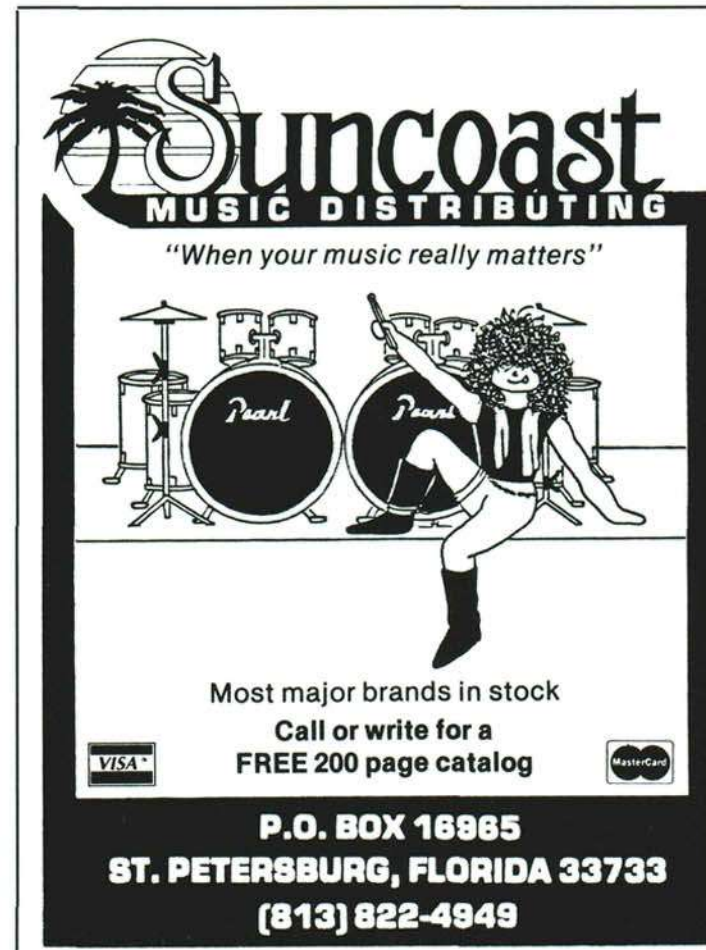
Since you'll only actually be playing for one or two hours a night, you should find other physical activities to keep you in shape on the road. It's easy to find a local gym as you move from city to city. And if this isn't your cup of tea, you can walk or jog just about anywhere. It never gets boring jogging in a different town every day. There are always lots of new things to see. Some sort of daily exercise, whether it be in a gym or outdoors, will give you energy that will last for the rest of the day.

Getting Along

After all is said and done, the most important thing on the road is to get along with the people you're working with. And that means *all* of the people. Obviously it's important to get along with your fellow band members. You're all going to have to make some changes and sacrifices in your daily routine. This is essential if everybody is to get along under less than perfect conditions, day after day, for possibly months at a time.

Your road crew should also be treated with the utmost respect. These are the guys who make your show *shine.* Remember, you're not any better than these people just because you're on stage and they're not. You're just doing different jobs. Good roadies and techs can really make a big difference on the road, so this point cannot be stressed enough. One of my favorite parts of touring is just sitting down, playing, and then walking off stage at the show's end, knowing that all my gear will be set back up the next night in the next town. What a luxury!

Try to learn as much as possible from the soundman and other technical people on your tour. The more you know about what makes your show *look* and *sound* good or bad, the more you'll benefit during the rest of your musical career. And even though things can get rough and stressed out on tour, you should learn to enjoy every minute you spend on the road. I guarantee you'll miss it dearly ten minutes after you're home.



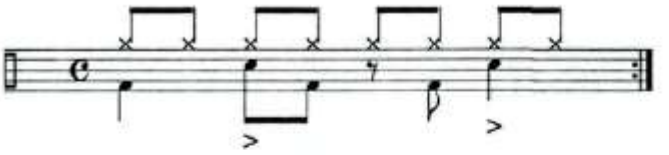
The Black Crowes' Steve Gorman

The Southern Harmony & Musical Companion

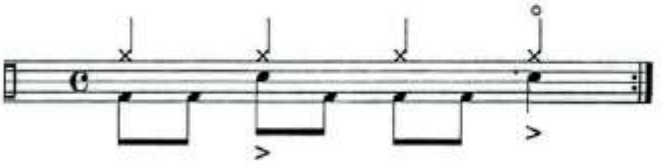
MUSIC KEY

"Remedy"
On the hit single Steve plays a medium-tempo rock groove with a lot of good interplay between the kick and snare drum. This particular beat is from the chorus sections of the tune.

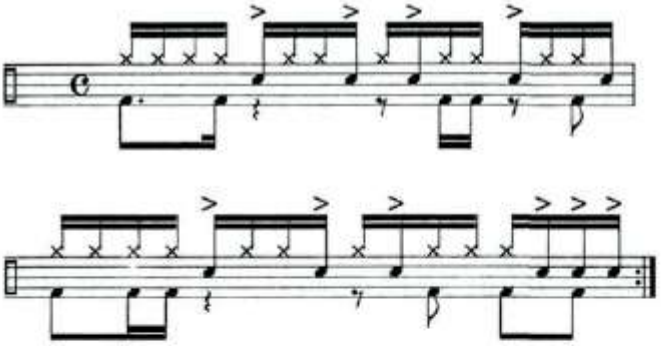
"Bad Luck Blue Eyes Goodbye"
Here Steve lays down a "snaky" kind of groove on this slow-tempo tune—it's slightly swung and right in the pocket.



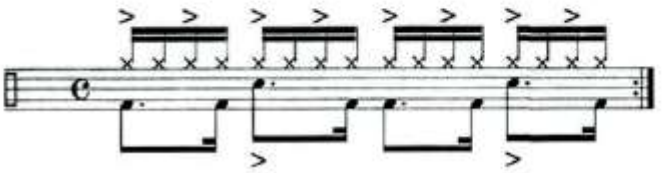
"Black Moon Creeping"
With a tempo and feel right out of '70s rock (Free and the Faces in particular), this track features a straightforward and driving verse section. Steve gives the tune just the right attitude here.



And in the chorus of the tune, Steve matches the syncopated riffing of the guitars with a nice 16th-note hand-to-hand pattern.



"My Morning Song"
Here's the verse pattern to "Morning." With a strong backbeat feel, Steve lays into both the snare and the 8th-note accents on the hi-hat. It rocks!



Tommy Lee's drum set-up includes DW Drums (10x14 Snare, 9x12, 10x14, 14x16, 16x18 Toms, 2-18x24 Basses), DW Pedals (DW 5000T BD Pedals, 5500T Hi-Hat) and DW Hardware (9700 Cymbal, 9900 Tom/Tom, 9500 Snare Stands).

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PEE WEE ELLIS: tn sx
RODNEY JONES: gtr
LARRY GOLDINGS: org
KENWOOD DENNARD: dr
VINCENT HENRY: bs
Shake Everything You've Got; Pass The Peas; I Got You; Got To Get You; Addictive Love; Children's World; Georgia On My Mind; Soul Power '92

This may be the funkiest disc of the year! Former James Brown sax-man Maceo Parker has *really* gone back to his roots on this, his third Verve offering. His first two albums *(Roots Revisited* and *Mo' Roots)* were critically acclaimed, bop-oriented releases. But on *Planet Groove,* Maceo gets back to the sound and style that made him *(and* JB) famous.

The energy and excitment on this live recording is inescapable, and the band is oh-so-tight, with JB veterans Ellis and Wesley forming a horn section with Parker that just percolates. And at the heart of the matter is Kenwood Dennard, absolutely *smoking* on every track. His drumming here respectfully pays homage to the originators—Stubblefield and Starks—with solid groove playing, and jumps into the '90s with some up-to-date technique and intensity. (Check out his burning duet with Maceo on the opening track, or his intro on "Soul Power '92.") The drummer gives *us* some on this one.

• ***William F. Miller***

TRIO DA PAZ

Brasil From The Inside
Concord Picante CCD-4524
ROMERO LUBAMBO: gtr
NILSON MATTA: bs
DUDUKA DA FONSECA: dr
JOANNE BRACKEEN: pno
HERBIE MANN: fl
CLAUDIO RODITI: trp, flghn
MAUCHA ADNET:vcl
Pedra Bonita; Keep The Spirits Singing; Aquarela Do Brasil; Vera Cruz; This Is For Luisa; Jeca's Baiao; Forgive Me; Trio Da Paz; Cor De Pecado; Manhattan Style; Vera Cruz (Reprise); Festa De Sao Jodo

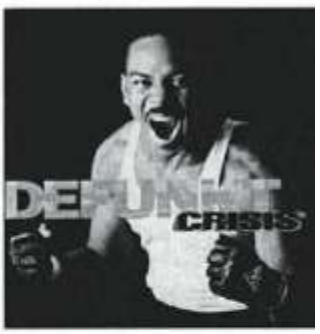
Billed as "chock full of feel-good Brasilian music," Trio Da Paz' debut disc is deeper than that. True, it does "feel good," the concept is lyrical throughout, and the sensuous opening cut has that familiar radio-friendly Rio sun 'n' sea samba sound. But the trio's multi-tiered rhythmic interplay and harmonic explorations are challenging as well. The crisp acoustic sound (with occasional electronic touches) centers around Romero Lubambo's adventurous and exciting guitar work. Star soloists lend variety to the disc, but the music finds its most original and intense moments in the trio setting.

Grooving through samba, jazz, bossa, and baiao feels, drummer Duduka Da Fonseca turns out a *tremendous* performance. Listen to the power he commands from deft cymbal work and the beautiful samba locomotion he achieves with brushes. Duduka truly knows "Brasil from the inside." Born in Rio, he has earned a reputation as an authoritative Brazilian/jazz figure in New York, both as an educator (at Drummers Collective) and as a performer who has worked with Airto, Jobim, Nana Vasconcelos, Eliane Elias, and others. This vibrant new trio mates Rio with New York in a perfect forum for Duduka's blend of drive, dynamics, and touch.

• ***Jeff Potter***

DEFUNCT

Crisis
Enemy 135-2
KENNY MARTIN: dr
JOSEPH BOWIE: tbn, cong, ld vcl
KEVIN BENTS: kybd, vcl
BILL BICKFORD: gtr, vcl
KIM CLARKE: bs, vcl
NITARA BOWIE: vcl
BYRON BOWIE: tn sax, vcl
JOHN MULKERIN: tpt, vcl
You Don't Know; Steppin' Off; Everyday They Come; Hit Me; Refuse To Love; Crisis; Next; Gotta Write A Book; Edge Of Tomorrow; Groove Fak-ed



CHUCKLEHEAD

Big Wet Kiss
Enuffa-MybuttIOOO
E-ROCK: dr, vcl
RINGO JONES: bs, vcl
Ee-TIDE: gtr, vcl
GECKO: kybd, fr hn, vcl
Huck: bori, tn sax, perc, vcl
LEN-E-LEN THE PIRATE KING: tn sax, vcl
SCOOTER: tpt, vcl
Too Much; Humdinger; Funk Is Or The Loose; Funky Bus; You Don't Have To Give It Up; Stalagmite; Soak Up The Fff; E-Rockin It; Brady; Ab Traffic Jam; Fret To The Finger; The Dog; Mix It Up

Defunkt has long been or the edge of funk, jazz, and rock

playing an aggressive, in-your-face menu with social messages flourishing among Joseph Bowie's trombone-led horn section riffs. These guys can still play—the sound may occasionally remind listeners of trombonist James Pankow's Chicago horn section, but they're more potent and dangerous than that.

Kenny Martin is a dynamic, resourceful, slamming drummer. He turns the beat all inside out on the awesome medium-tempo "Everyday They Come," and loosens up for some dirty pounding on the title track and a bit of slinky prowling on "Groove Fak-ed." This rhythm section really digs in, and Martin smokes on everything. They are genuinely funky, but rock almost as seriously as Mother's Finest. The arranging isn't quite as quirky as, say, the Lounge Lizards, but it's nearly as irreverent.

Chucklehead began at Wesleyan College in 1990, and for a debut album, *Big Wet Kiss* is nothing to sneeze at. They may not have the musicianship of Defunkt, but their grooves stand up real well. These guys are clever topical lyricists and decent rappers, but what really gets them over is the power of the horns and E-Rock's rhythm mates. E-Rock himself brings it in hyperdrive for "Funk Is On The Loose," and adds tasty licks to the sophisticated groove of "Stalagmite."

Here's hoping we'll be hearing more rapping with big horn bands soon—it's a mighty powerful sound. *[Enemy Records, 11-36 31st Ave., Long Island City, NY 11106, Enuffa-Mybutt Records, 89 Massachusetts Ave., Suite 307, Boston, MA 02115]*

Robin Tolleson

SHARKBAIT

Blowtorch Face-Lift
Primitech9101-2
Players: M.C. WHITEYHO, CHICKEN OF THE SEA, 3:16, MR. SEA TEA, CHARLIE BEER
Vertical Assault; Oh My Brothers!; And Crush; God Devil Head; Song For Trees; SHO (Peace I); Queer Boy Behind An Iron Gate; Praise God; Arabia Deserta; Peace II; Lost At Sea; I Am So Close; Metal; God Devil Head (conclusion); War Crush

In the waters of Sharkbait, all that matters is crushing, more crushing, and the sheer physical pleasure derived from crushing. The band employs and destroys everything from household appliances, sheet metal, auto hood hinges, drum brakes, shock absorber springs from heavy equipment trucks, and electric jackhammers in its percussive ensemble. And yes, there's even a set of acoustic drums.

On paper, it seems like the results would be little more than a headache. But these San Francisco-based bashers actually produce a strangely intoxicating groove. An Afro-inspired romp lines "Song For Trees," for instance, while the catchy stomp beat of "And Crush" is single-worthy material.

But Sharkbait is most at home on the stage, where it invites fans to "crush" on various appliances and metal pipes along with the band. During the Lollapalooza tour this past summer, lucky fans won sessions in the group's "Crush Cage," a cyclone-fenced arena for mutilating objects to the Sharkbait backbeat! *[Primetech Releases, 3501 California St., Suite 204, San Francisco, CA 94107]*

• Matt Peiken

ERROL PARKER

A Night In Tunisia
Sahara 1015
PHILLIP HARPER, MICHAEL THOMAS: trp
DOUG HARRIS: sx
DONALD HARRISON: **alsx**
BILL SAXTON: tn sx
TYRONE JEFFERSON: tbn
PATIENCE HIGGINS: bar **sx**
CARY DE NIGRIS: gtr
REGGIE WASHINGTON: bs
ERROL PARKER: dr
A Night In Tunisia; Daydream At Noon; The Rai; Lonesome Sister; Ol' Man River; A Ballad For Doug; Soul Concerto; Lemon Meringue

Naming himself after his two favorite musicians, Errol Garner and Charlie Parker, bandleader/drummer Errol Parker has been breaking ground for years with his tentet recordings, but without much success or notoriety. But the band can be heard in clubs around New York, and you can find his records if you know where to look.

To make an old standard like "Night In Tunisia" or "Ol' Man River" sound invigorating is no easy task, but Parker and his tentet (as always, made up of Manhattan's finest jazzers) not only resurrects them, they make them their own. Brash and forthright in person, Parker brings these same qualities to compositions that sound almost South African in their snaky melodies, a bit '50s New York in their Mingus-ish atmosphere.

Drum-wise, Parker is completely linear, often keeping 8th-note "&s" consistent on the hi-hat while bouncing off of the toms and cymbal bells for colorful commentary. A conga drum replaces the usual snare drum. Occasionally, he'll cut loose with a jazz cymbal beat, but you'd be hard-pressed to find a typical jazz approach here. What you *will* find is closer to the big-tent enthusiasm of a circus drummer, with the intellect of Max Roach and the fire of Gene Krupa.

Past thirtysomething, Parker nonetheless brings a youthful energy to the music that must be born out of struggling to get his unique, adult big band music heard in a youth-oriented society. Forever young by default and perseverance. *[Sahara Records, 1143 First Ave., New York, NY 10021]*

• Ken Micallef

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Respected concert and studio musician and Drummers Collective instructor Kim Plainfield bucks the current trend of highly specialized, wafer-thin drum studies with an excellent new book/cassette package, *Advanced Concepts*. Covering points as basic as single- and double-stroke roll development to one as advanced as polyrhythms, its nearly one hundred pages bulge with usable, broad-ranging ideas.

The first of three sections targets technique development and hand-foot coordination. These exercises' clear connection with material in later chapters compensates for their

tediousness. The Contemporary Styles chapter gives brief nods to swing and shuffles, but focuses on various forms of funk and Brazilian and Afro-Cuban set drumming; the patterns presented are very hip and musical. Plainfield's note-dense approach to fills and solos in the final section relies heavily on cycled note groupings. Several extended solos illustrate how they can be varied and applied around the kit.

Much attention is paid to making *Advanced Concepts* as accessible as possible. The author demonstrates most patterns at both slow and performance tempos, and throughout the text he offers many helpful hints on how to break down complex figures into more manageable components. Two-bar count-offs make locking in with the tape a snap. The tape's mix is fine, and Plainfield's delivery is direct and refreshingly non-patronizing.

Even amidst the reliably worthy Drummers Collective drum study series, *Advanced Concepts* shines for its comprehensive relevance to virtually all popular music drummers. If you plan to buy only one drum book this year, don't miss checking out this one.

• ***Richard Watson***

VIDEO

DENNIS CHAMBERS
Serious Moves **and**
In The Pocket
DCI Music Video
Music Ventures
15800 N.W. 84th Ave.
Miami FL 33014
Time: 65 minutes each
Price: $39.95 each

It would seem that Dennis Chambers' videotaping session was quite fruitful: so much so that DCI needed to release it on two tapes. And luckily for us they did. *Serious Moves* and *In The Pocket* combined give an incredibly in-depth look into Dennis's playing.

With *In The Pocket,* Dennis explores the time-playing aspects of his drumming. He takes us back to his earliest influences, including James Brown, Booker T. & The MGs, the Meters, and Herbie Hancock. He comments on and gives playing examples of the great drummers from those bands, including Clyde Stubblefield, Melvin Parker, Al Jackson, Zigaboo Modeliste, and Harvey Mason. It's great to hear Dennis's own take on such groove classics as "Cold Sweat" and "Chameleon."

Throughout the tape Dennis is accompanied by his long-time rhythm-section mate Gary Grainger, and Dennis offers many tips on working with bassists and within rhythm sections. Also included are performances of Dennis with Gary, John Scofield, and Jim Beard. (It's a nice opportunity for those who never got to see Dennis in action with the group that really put him on the drum-star map.) On this tape he performs "So You Say," "Blue Matter" (with Dennis's signature triplets on the kick), "Pick Hits," and "Loud Jazz."

Later in the tape more advanced timekeeping concepts are covered, including ambidextrous patterns using the hands to cover more sound sources on the kit: the type of thing Dennis was doing back in his P-Funk days. And whether it be simple or advanced, Dennis's groove concept is based on "the pocket," a topic he clearly defines on this tape.

With *Serious Moves,* we get a close-up view of Dennis's personal bag of tricks. His patented "sweeps," his own unique version of cross-sticking, and his cymbal cross-overs are all revealed. Also, we get an open and honest discussion of how Dennis developed his hands to such a high degree.

Dennis also discusses the importance of relaxation at the kit, along with some other helpful tips including practicing in front of a mirror, working with drum machines, some double-pedal concepts, and Dennis's approach to soloing. Regarding solos, Dennis performs a long one covering a lot of his tricks and concepts—*very* inspirational. Also, Scofield and band appear on this tape as well, performing tunes that feature Dennis quite a bit, including "Trim," "The Nag," "Wabash," "Make Me," and "Time Marches On."

As usual, DCI has done an excellent job. The production quality is first-rate: camera angles are right where you want them to be, screen-on-screen effects give you both a full shot of Dennis as well as what his right foot is doing in those flashier sections. And the sound is good. Honorable mention should also go to interviewer/creative consultant Dan Thress: He appears on the tape with Dennis, helping to coax and clarify many points. So the bottom line is, if you want to focus on Dennis's time playing, pick up *In The Pocket;* if you want sheer chops, *Serious Moves* is for you. However, chances are you'll want *both.*

William F. Miller

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We received many letters and wish to thank all of you who've made the effort to write us about the outcome of your Sound Contest. Most comments were so positive that we have to first check carefully if we can even print them without getting in trouble with the competition. We'll keep you posted. ***To the winners: Congratulations!***

First Place - Set of Sound Formula Cymbals: **Robert Hernandez**, Pharr, TX
Second Place -GMS Snare Drum: **David Runco**, Astoria, NY

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Steve Clary, Mt. Vernon, IL
Leon Richmond, Helena, MT
Tommy Anderson, Bay City, MI
David Solinski, St. Benedict, PA
Robert Rodriguez, Pomona, CA
Jeremy Deans, Omaha, NE
Steven Ramsey, Palatine, IL

11th - 30th place
Paiste T-Shirt
Kevin Jendras, Cicero, IL
Mark Rigsby, Columbus, OH
David Murray, Clark, NJ
John Morgan, St. Louis, MO
Sy Seyler, Gaithersburg, MD
Dennis McLennand Wellington,FL
Sacha Morisset, Portage River, NB,Canada
Gary Randazzo, Valley Stream, NY
Roger Everett, Pocahontas, AR
Brad Robinson, Carlsbad, CA
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Mario Jeffries, Vallejo, CA
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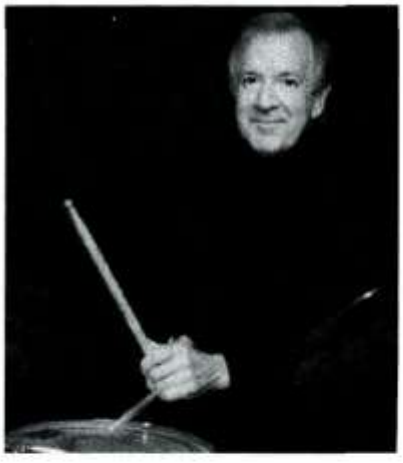

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In Memoriam

Marion "Chick" Evans

Marion "Chick" Evans died August 25, 1992 in Santa Fe, New Mexico at the age of 89. One of the founding partners of the Evans Products Company, Chick Evans is credited with being the first person to put a plastic drumhead into commercial production.

A working drummer in the 1940s and '50s, Evans was dissatisfied with the inconsistencies of calf heads, and sought an alternative. After experimenting with a variety of synthetic materials, he hit upon a method for stapling heads made of DuPont *Mylar* onto wooden hoops. He introduced his heads to the percussion market in the late '50s. Though crude by modern standards, these original Evans heads ultimately led to the complete revolutionizing of the drumhead industry. Chick Evans figured prominently in *MD's* feature, "The Development Of The Mylar Drumhead," in the August 1989 issue.

Sam Muchnick

Sam Muchnick, another pivotal figure in drumhead development, died in August at the age of 84. A chemist who specialized in adhesive technology, Muchnick was approached by Remo Belli in the late 1950s for advice on how *Mylar* drumheads—and particularly their method of mounting—could be improved. Muchnick created a mounting system that involved punching holes around the edge of a round *Mylar* blank and inserting this edge into an aluminum channel shaped into a hoop. The channel was filled with a liquid adhesive that would flow through the holes in the *Mylar* and, when dry, effectively lock the membrane into the aluminum hoop. Muchnick also developed a process by which heat was applied to the blank to form a hat-shaped head that would fit over a drumshell and effectively eliminate any chance of creasing and tucking in the head. These methods—or variations of them—are still used for the mounting of most plastic drumheads today. Muchnick's contributions in this area are included in the August 1989 feature mentioned above.

Later in his life, Muchnick invented and developed the *Kevlar* high-strength drumhead, under the Duraline brand name. He also developed synthetic sticks combining *Kevlar* and fiberglass. The sticks were not successful, and the Duraline company went out of business after a few years. But the *Kevlar* head has become popular in the marching percussion field, and is now offered by several different companies.

Alvin Stoller

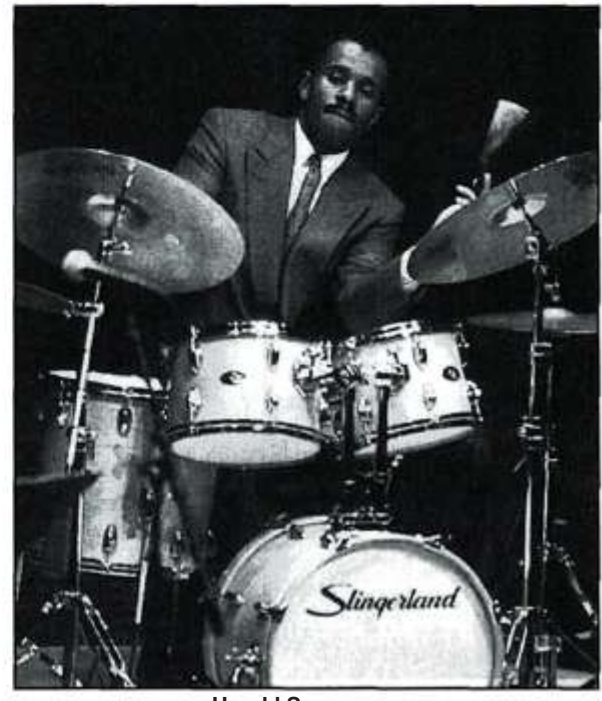
Veteran jazz, big band, and show drummer Alvin Stoller died in October of 1992 at the age of 67. A confirmed drummer from his Brooklyn boyhood, Stoller won the Gene Krupa Drum Contest at the 1939 New York World's Fair at the age of 14, which led to gigs with Benny Goodman, Les Brown, Vaughn Monroe, Charlie Spivak, and Tommy Dorsey. In 1948, Stoller relocated to Los Angeles, where he became active in radio and recording work, working with artists such as Mel Torme, Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, and Harry James. Ultimately, he became one of LA's top movie and TV drummer/percussionists, with a career spanning over forty years. Stoller was featured in the January 1990 issue of *Modern Drummer*.

Thelonius Monk Jazz Drums Competition

More than two hundred young drummers from around the world submitted demo tapes to the Thelonius Monk Jazz Institute in Washington D.C. last fall, in hopes of walking off with first prize in the Institute's sixth annual instrumental competition (the first ever for drummers). By October, the field had been narrowed to fifteen semi-finalists, who performed before a panel of six distinguished judges and a houseful of jazz fans on October 24 at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall in New York City. And on October 25, a winner was chosen among six finalists in prestigious Avery Fisher Hall.

Institute chairman Thelonius Monk, Jr. noted that it was particularly gratifying to see the competition moved to New York City and to Lincoln Center, located only a block away from where his father had grown up and maintained an apartment his entire life. And as New York City mayor David Dinkins noted in his opening remarks on finals night, "From this group will emerge the leading jazz drummers of the 21st century." *Modern Drummer* was pleased to be a contributing sponsor to the competition.

The drummers were



Harold Summey

evaluated on a multitude of criteria, including time, technique, stick control, swing factor, solo ability, taste, dynamics, tone production, interaction with the band, interaction with the audience, leadership, and stage presence. Sitting in judgement were Alan Dawson, Jack DeJohnette, Roy Haynes, Ed Shaughnessy, Jeff Watts, and Dave Weckl.

The semi-finalists were required to become familiar with eleven classic jazz tunes by the likes of Miles Davis, Wayne Shorter, Jackie McLean, Thad Jones, and, of course, Thelonius Monk—from which four would be picked at random for them to perform. The next night, the six finalists were required to play two from that pool, along with a mandatory reading of Charlie Parker's slow blues, "Now's The Time." Each drummer performed along with an all-star jazz band that included Ronnie Matthews on piano, David Williams on bass, Brian Lynch on trumpet, and Willie Williams on saxophone.

Third place was shared by 31-year-old Tony Jefferson, of Sarasota, Florida, and 22-year-old Alvester Garnett, of Richmond, Virginia. They were each awarded a $3,000 scholarship sponsored by the United Black Fund of America. Jefferson showed lots of technique and a keen sense of dynamics on Shorter's "Mahgong" and Jones' "Two Bass Hit." Garnett had Billy Higgins-like charisma behind the kit and swung in a slick, understated fashion. What he may have lacked in flash, he made up in feeling.

Second place was awarded to Jorge Rossy, a 27-year-old native of Barcelona, Spain. The seasoning that Rossy picked up on gigs with saxophonist Paquito D'Rivera, Dave Valentin, and Donald Byrd showed on his polished set. His Latin chops came to the fore on "Two Bass Hit," and his solo on "Mahgong" just may have put him in contention for first place.

But the first place award was snatched away from Rossy by 28-year-old Harold Summey, from Washington, D.C. Through sheer force of personality, slick cross-sticking work, and flashy soloing, Summey became the clear crowd favorite. "It's a clinic!" shouted one unbiased observer seated behind me throughout Harold's performance of Wayne Shorter's "Sommo," Jackie McLean's "Dr. Jeckyll," and Bird's "Now's The Time." And though he was only granted eight bars of solo space, his chops and personality commanded more. Even the band backed off to watch Summey do his stuff. As guest host Bill Cosby announced the winner, he preceded the name with, "It's no surprise...." Indeed. On this night, Harold Summey owned Avery Fisher Hall.

Jorge Rossy won a $5,000 scholarship provided by Sony Music Entertainment. Summey won a $10,000 scholarship donated by the Coca-Cola Company—along with the respect of a whole houseful of drummers.

• ***Bill Milkowski***

PAS Headquarters And Museum Opens

Over two hundred people were in attendance this past August for the grand opening of the Percussive Arts Society's new International Headquarters/ Museum. The facility, which is located on two acres in Lawton, Oklahoma's Elmer-Thomas Park, is a 5,000-square-foot space. Of that space, 2,000 square feet are dedicated to the museum area, which features exhibits of drums and percussion from around the world. For more information about the PAS and its new facility, contact Steve Beck at the Percussive Arts Society, P.O. Box 25, Lawton, Oklahoma 73502, tel: (405) 353-1455, fax: (405) 353-1456.

Clinics And Shows

Yamaha's Band And Orchestral Division and the **Avedis Zildjian** company joined forces to sponsor a Performance Showcase at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. The event featured top drummers **Chuck Morris and Steve Houghton,** as well as marching authority Tom Float, who employed the drum line from Sterling Heights High School to demonstrate his ideas. The event ended with an evening concert featuring Houghton with the Wayne State University Concert Band and Morris with the Wayne State Jazz Band.

Yamaha has also made available a brochure giving the parameters for its fourth annual **Young Performing Artist Program.** For more information, write Yamaha's Young Performing Artist Program, Yamaha Corp. of America, PO. Box 899, Grand Rapids, MI 49512-0899.

The Fourth Annual Florida Drum Expo recently raised $2,000 for the preservation of Tampa's historic Cuban Club. The six-hour event featured demonstrations and performances by **Kenny Aronoff, Tito Puente, Bias Elias, Chuck Morris, Enzo Tedesco, Dom Famularo, Danny Gottlieb, Luis Conte, and Giovano Hidalgo,** all of whom joined together on stage for a grand finale.

Pearl recently co-sponsored clinics by **Gregg Bissonette and Dennis Chambers.** Pearl and **Zildjian** cymbals presented Bissonette in several clinics across the country, and Coyle Music of Columbus, Ohio joined Pearl in bringing Chambers to the shop for a clinic for over two hundred eager drummers.

The sixth annual **West L.A. Music Expo** was held recently at the Los Angeles Airport Hilton. The two-day event attracted over four thousand musicians, composers, and educators to check out music equipment and technology from over one hundred exhibitors. Product demonstrations and in-depth seminars were conducted, and guests were encouraged to try out the equipment on display. Some of the top drummers in attendance were **Tommy Lee, Alan White, Michael Cartellone, Jim Keltner, Peter Criss, and Jonathan Moffet.** Among the drummers demonstrating new products were Eric Singer at the Pearl booth, **Toss Panos, Joey Heredia, Mark Shulman, and John Hernandez** at the Sabian/Drum Workshop exhibit, and Nick **Menza** at the Tama/Ibanez display. Among the new products on display were Roland's *TDE-7* electronic drumset and the Alesis company's *D4* drum module.

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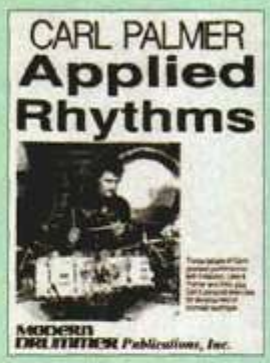

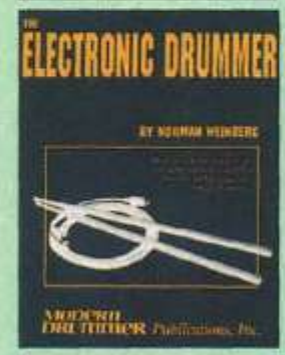

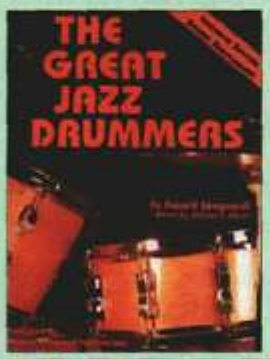

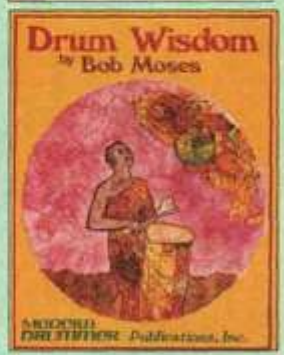

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Photo Requirements

1. Photos must be in color and of high quality. (35mm slides are preferred; color prints will be considered. Polaroids cannot be accepted.)
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4. Drums should be photographed against a neutral background. Avoid "busy" backgrounds such as in your basement, garage, or bedroom.
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MODERN DRUMMER'S 15th ANNUAL READERS POLL

The purpose of MD's annual poll is to recognize drummers and percussionists in all fields of music whose musical efforts—recordings, live performances, or educational activities—have been especially notable during the past year. It is in no way meant to suggest that one musician is "better" than another. Rather, it is to call attention to those performers who, through their outstanding musicianship, have been inspirational to us all.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. You must use the official MD ballot—no photocopies.
2. Please print or type your selection in the corresponding box. See the category descriptions below for clarification.
3. Make only one selection in each category. (It is not necessary to vote in every category. Leave blank any category for which you do not have a firm opinion.)
4. Affix appropriate postage and mail the entire ballot to *Modern Drummer's* offices at the address shown on the reverse of the ballot card.
5. Ballots must be postmarked no later than March 1, 1993. Results will be announced in the July '93 issue of MD.

CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

Hall Of Fame

Vote for the artist, living or dead, who you feel has made a historic contribution to the art of drumming. Current members of the Hall of Fame are not eligible for this category. Those members are: Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich, John Bonham, Keith Moon, Neil Peart, Steve Gadd, Louie Bellson, Tony Williams, Billy Cobham, Joe Morello, Carl Palmer, Bill Bruford, Art Blakey, and Max Roach.

Ail-Around Drummer

This category is not intended to indicate the "overall best" drummer. Rather, it is to recognize drummers noted for performing in a variety of musical styles and applications, instead of one specific band.

Studio Drummer

This category is for drummers known as multi-session players who record with many artists, or who are involved in projects such as jingles, TV, and film scores. (Do not include recording artists who spend time in the studio, but only as a member of one group.)

Mainstream Jazz Drummer

This category is restricted to drummers in small-group, acoustic jazz.

Electric Jazz Drummer

This category is reserved for drummers who perform in fusion or jazz-rock.

Up & Coming Drummer

This category is reserved for the most promising artist brought to the public's attention within the past 12 months.

Recorded Performance

Vote for your favorite recording by a drummer as a leader or as a member of a group. Limit your selection to recordings released within the past 12 months. Please include the artist's name, the complete title of the song, and the album from which it came.

MD's HONOR ROLL

Artists who have been selected by the MD readership as winners in any one category of the Readers Poll for a total of five years are placed on MD's Honor Roll. This is our way of recognizing the unique talent and lasting popularity of those special artists. Artists placed on the Honor Roll in any given category are subsequently ineligible in that category, although they remain eligible in other categories. (The exception to this is the "Recorded Performance" category, which will remain open to all artists.) Artists who have achieved Honor Roll status (and are now ineligible in the category shown) are listed below.

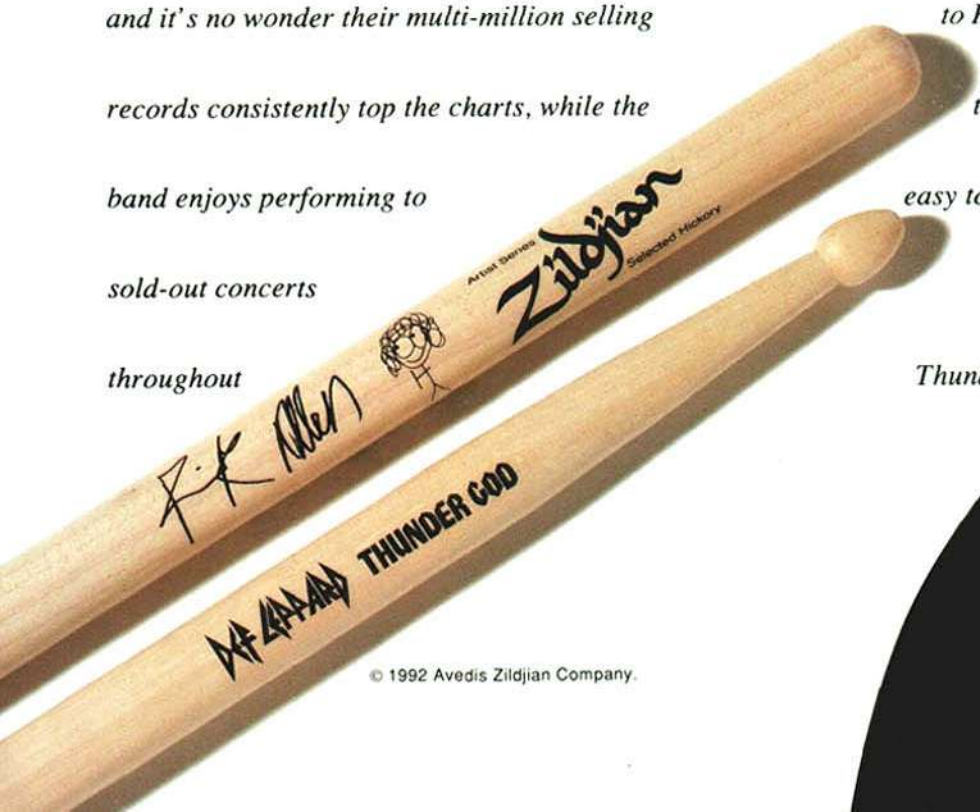
Alex Acuna: Latin/Brazilian Percussionist
Airto: Latin American and Latin/Brazilian Percussionist
Gary Burton: Mallet Percussionist
Anthony J. Cirone: Classical Percussionist
Phil Collins: Pop/Mainstream Rock Drummer
Vic Firth: Classical Percussionist
Steve Gadd: Ail-Around Drummer and Studio Drummer
David Garibaldi: R&B and Funk Drummer
Larrie Londin: Country Drummer
Rod Morgenstein: Rock and Progressive Rock Drummer
Neil Peart: Rock Drummer and Multi-Percussionist
Buddy Rich: Big Band Drummer
Ed Shaughnessy: Big Band Drummer
Steve Smith: Ail-Around Drummer
Dave Weckl: Electric Jazz Drummer
Tony Williams: Jazz and Mainstream Jazz Drummer

In 1993, professional quality ethnic percussion instruments will be known by a new name.

STICK OF AGES.

RICK ALLEN, DEF LEPPARD

Let's face it, Rick Allen is not just "any" ordinary drummer. Very few musicians have demonstrated his perseverance. His contribution is vital to Def Leppard's musical approach, and it's no wonder their multi-million selling records consistently top the charts, while the band enjoys performing to sold-out concerts throughout the world. All of these things were factored into developing Zildjian's Rick Allen Thunder God model drumstick. It's the only stick bearing the Def Leppard name, and according to Rick, the only stick tough enough to withstand the intensity of a Def Leppard show. It was no easy task, but using Rick as inspiration, we realized nothing is impossible. The Rick Allen Thunder God model is now available to Rockers of all ages at your favorite drum shop.



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